

# The Impact of Teaching Methods on Language Learning Strategies Employed by Learners in a Foreign Language Context

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## **Dedication**

*In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*I dedicate this work to my late grandmother, Nafeesa Mekkaui, to my late mother, Fatima Ahmed Khalil, (Babba Nafeesa) and to my late Uncle ,Sa'ad ad Deen Sayed Mekkaui , and to my Father, Hassan Osman Fadle, who Continue to be a great source of inspiration in my life*

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## Abstract

Language learning strategies (LLS) have been the focus of research since the mid-1970s up to the present; however, teaching them has not received the same attention. The present study is an attempt to bridge this gap by investigating how they could be taught. The overall aim of the study is to investigate the frequency of LLS and the impact of teaching methods on students' choices of their strategies. It also highlights the role of English proficiency level in choosing the LLS. A total of 140 students, 70 as a treatment group and 70 as a control group, and ten teachers from the University of Nizwa participated in this study which used a mixed methods approach. The researcher conducted a questionnaire to find out the frequency use of LLS employed by the university students and follow up interviews were done with teachers and learners to probe the perceptions of teachers and students of LLS and to find out the impact of teaching methods on students' choices. Students' diaries and the researcher's own observations were used to collect the data and to complement other tools. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively by the Grounded Theory approach and quantitatively via descriptive statistics, independent-sample-t-test, and one-way ANOVA. According to the findings, the students participated in the study were 'medium' users of strategies and that the teaching methods have a significant impact on the LLS which can be taught within cognitive and sociocultural theories, based on a clearly designed model. The study also showed that language proficiency has a correlation with the choice of learning strategies. Students' dairies and interviews illustrated that they benefited from the group work, the scaffolding received and from the learning strategies instruction. Moreover, teachers who participated in the study showed positive attitudes towards LLS. Practical recommendations and suggestions for future research are also made.

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## List of Abbreviations

ACT	Adaptive Control of Thought
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CG	Control Group
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CP	Critical Pedagogy
DV	Dependent Variable
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
IQR	Interquartile
IV	Independent Variable
MV	Moderating Variable
LAD	Language Acquisition Device
LTM	Long-Term Memory
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LLS	language Learning Strategies
SBI	Strategy Based Instruction
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SCT	Sociocultural Theory
SD	Standard Deviation
SILL	Strategy Inventory for Language Learning
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
STM	Short-Term Memory
TG	Treatment Group
TOEFL	Testing of English as a Foreign Language
UG	Universal Grammar
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction and Background to the Study**

#### ***1.0. Rationale for the Study***

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the thesis and to shed light on both the background and the context for the current investigation. The following sections cover the statement of the problem to be explored, English language teaching and learning in Oman, some information about the University of Nizwa, where the study has taken place, the research questions and the method to be adopted.

This study has evolved out of my experience as a teacher of English to speakers of other languages in Sudanese and Omani schools at different levels ranging from preparatory and secondary schools to a university level for more than 25 years. To explore and explicate the relationship between teaching and learning English as a second/foreign language, the researcher intends to carry out an interdisciplinary and integrative study. It operates upon different but integrated disciplines: linguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive and sociocultural perspectives. The researcher thinks that one discipline may not give concrete answers to the questions that concern the teaching and learning of a second/foreign language. This may go in line with Rampton's (1997), suggestion, cited in Block (2007), that the field of applied linguistics should be moved in the direction of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches in order to study, in the real world, those language related problems.

Before the 1960s, scholars and educationalists concerned with teaching and learning attributed the causes of success or failure of English language learners to the methods adopted in language teaching only. This may explain the continuous shift of teaching methods from Direct Method to Audio-Lingual Method and then to Communicative Language Teaching. Afterwards, however, the focus has been shifted to the learners and the way they learn rather than the way they are taught. As pointed out by Kozulin (1998:154) cited in Kinginger (2002:242) the focus of learning has shifted from teachers communicating information to the learners for the purpose of developing their learning potentialities. This shift has emerged as a result of the findings of cognitive learning research to identify the mental processes used by learners in their endeavor to understand, remember and be able to use the target language. Moreover, De Bot et al

(2005:78) point out that the main reason for this shift was the move away from a focus on linguistics to a focus on the learner. Therefore, the interest was in the sociolinguistic aspects of the language as a tool of communication rather than viewing language as a system. This shift has led to what was known as Communicative Language Teaching.

As noticed by Grenfell and Macaro (2007:9) up to the 1970s, language learning was considered as a psychological phenomenon. For example, Behaviourist theories viewed the problem of language as a matter of jockeying the psychology of the individual, which may justify the emphasis on the practice of phrasal drilling, learning through repetitions, and stimulus-response. Moreover, grammar was learnt as an individual habit rather than contextualized. This is followed by the Cognitive Approach which had its genesis in Chomskyan revolution in the 1950s. Nunan (2013:51) attributes the changes in the methods by which language was taught during the 1970s to the reappraisal of language itself by linguists and educators. He rightly points out that, before the 1970s language was seen as a system of rules which should be internalized by learners by themselves or by the help of their teachers or by any available means. This may explain why the ultimate aim of the learners was to master the structures without giving any emphasis to their meaning. During the 1970s and onwards, the view of linguists to language was changed as mentioned above. Nunan (2013) points out that language was viewed as a tool for expressing meaning which had an effect on the way language and learners should be taught. This gives insight to the researchers and scholars and allows them to think of learners as active participants who can enhance their own learning by employing certain language learning strategies.

The topic of language learning strategies, prompted by an article written by Rubin (1975), has flourished since the early seventies. Hence, since the early 1970s as noticed by Wenden (1987:3), scholars shifted their interest from the methods of teaching to the learner characteristics, and their endeavour to effectively learn the second language. This shift as asserted by Johnson (2006) did not take place alone by itself but it was influenced by epistemological changes in the way different intellectual traditions had interpreted how human learn.

This may explain why the learner-centred approach was probably preferred to the teacher-centred one after this shift. From his own experience the researcher claims that

many teachers, maybe still influenced by traditional views and methods, scarcely intervene in the way their learners learn and the way they utilize learning strategies. In other words, students are left to choose for themselves whatever they think is useful to their learning. They may transfer strategies that they are used to in learning their first language or other subjects. These strategies may be effective and facilitative or may be ineffective and hinder their learning. Students may simply rely on translation from the target language into their mother tongue, or rely on rote learning as they accustomed to doing when memorising verses of the Holy Qura'n or on repetition as they used to do earlier in memorizing classic Arabic poetry. McDonough (1995:81) asserts that strategies are not necessarily good in themselves. He adds that any strategy, if employed inappropriately, can cause negative results.

Moreover, the idea of the teaching of language learning strategies in Omani classrooms (at schools, colleges and universities) comes in line with the new pedagogy which has been introduced in the Omani school system. A report issued by the Ministry of Education states that “education is now centred more on learners, using an approach based on critical thinking, autonomous learning and life-long learning, as opposed to conventional rote learning,” (Ministry of Education:2006). Al-Jardani (2012) also claims that education is rapidly developing over time which entails regular reform in different educational aspects including teaching styles and methods, curriculum design and better understanding of the learning process. The researcher claims that by introducing language learning strategies instruction into Omani schools, the new pedagogy can be more learner-centred which may encourage autonomous learning and life-long learning.

### ***1.1 Statement of the Problem***

Despite the proliferation of research articles and studies that have been carried out since the 1970s investigating language learning strategies, few explored the impact of teaching on the use of these strategies by non-native English speakers. As noticed by Macaro (2001:35) little work has been carried out to explore the impact of different teachers' approaches on learners' use of strategies. Chamot (2004:24) also points out that only few researchers have investigated the impact of helping the less able how language learners develop their performance through the instruction of learning strategies. To the

best of the researcher's knowledge, no researcher has investigated the relationship between the teaching methods and the use of learning strategies in the Sultanate of Oman.

The problem to be investigated in this study is the attitude of some teachers towards learning strategies employed by their learners assuming that these students are able to choose them on their own and the effect of this on their strategic learning. Still, some other teachers may not see the importance of these strategies, let alone teaching them. Therefore, it is hypothesized that the methods adopted by teachers and their beliefs about language learning strategies may have positive or negative influence on the use of these strategies.

The researcher proposes that this is a result of the teaching methods that they adopt and their own beliefs in how learning takes place. Therefore, their *teaching methods* may have an impact on the use of learning strategies by their foreign language students. According to Chamot (2011:35) there has been no agreement about the degree to which teachers are capable of providing learning strategies instruction explicitly. She attributes this discrepancy between the teachers' attitudes towards learning strategies instruction to several factors, e.g. teaching style and disposition, classroom organization which may determine how much time they may spend on teaching learning strategies, and curriculum objectives. She rightly claims that the teacher's personal approach can have an impact on every aspect of his/her teaching methods. For instance, those who practice a transition type of teaching may simply tell students to use certain strategies regardless of their preferences and prior knowledge about strategies. Others may introduce strategies without developing students' awareness of their strategies and therefore fail to teach them. In other words different methods reflect different views of teachers in the way they help their learners and what these learners bring to the classroom and to the learning process. Choosing a method entails choosing a view of the learner as pointed out by Allwright and Hanks (2009:38).

In this study, the variables to be defined are 'teaching methods' in terms of the procedures and techniques adopted by different teachers and 'learning strategies' in terms of the different ways of learning employed by students. Therefore, the study considers the relationship to be investigated between variables as cause-effect. The purpose of the study is to see if the teaching methods adopted (the cause) influence the use of learning

strategies (the effect). Therefore, the methods are the independent variable (IV) and the learning strategies are the dependent variables (DV). Also the learner's language proficiency is considered to be a moderating variable (MV) since it may increase or decrease the impact of the teaching methods on the use of learning strategies.

The researcher bears in mind the drawbacks and unreliable tasks replete with such projects as pointed out by Kumaravadivelu (2006:89) who claims that any comparison of language teaching methods with the view of evaluating their classroom effectiveness has experimental and explanatory defects. In other words, not all the variables associated with classroom learning and teaching can be controlled in order to investigate the impact of a method on learning outcomes. Besides, what is observed in the classroom may be as a result of subjective interpretation rather than objective assessment. The researcher claims that he neither aims to compare language teaching methods, nor to evaluate them, but intends to investigate and describe the extent to which the teaching methods can encourage students' use of effective language learning strategies. Moreover, he will explore the role of collaborative learning and scaffolding officered by teachers and more able students to the way students use these strategies. The impact of English language proficiency will be investigated also.

### ***1.2 Nature of the Study***

To probe the above problem a triangulation mixed methods approach will be applied, which is, as will be explained later in the body of the research, a type of design in which different but complementary data will be collected on the same topic. Therefore, in this study, quantitative instruments such as questionnaires and qualitative data, such as, observations, interviews and students' diaries will be used concurrently. The reason for using all these instruments is to bring together the strengths of different forms of research to investigate the impact of teaching methods on the use of learning strategies employed by Omani students at a higher educational institution. This will be carried out by comparing, validating and corroborating the results collected by the two means.

### ***1.3 Significance of the Study***

As mentioned above there are few studies concerning language learning strategies instruction, either implicitly or explicitly. Second language acquisition (SLA) is claimed to be dominated by cognitive perspective (Firth and Wagner (1997). Moreover, it is

claimed that sociocultural and cognitive perspectives are parallel and irreconcilable as pointed out by Zuengler and Miller (2006). This study is an attempt to reconcile and put an end to this paradigm war between the camps by introducing language learning strategies within the framework of the two superficially contrasting views. The researcher thinks that this study is significant for both teachers and learners in Oman or in any similar foreign language context where learners may tend to transfer learning strategies from the first language learning to the foreign language learning regardless of their appropriateness. It is significant for teachers because it provides a theoretical background pertaining language learning strategies and proposes a model for teaching language learning strategies which can be amended to suit learning contexts. It is significant for learners as it suggests how to use these strategies appropriately and how to learn collaboratively in the classroom contexts, exchanging experience with each other.

#### ***1.4 Context***

In the developing countries English is considered to be the language of modernization and technological advancement. Moreover, at present most of the world's scientific periodicals are in English as well as international trade and conferences requiring English as a means of communication (Greenbaum: 1996). This may elucidate the fact that English is the language taught as a foreign language in most of the developing countries today. It is being taught in more than 100 countries all over the world as claimed by Crystal (2002).

Thus, one may claim that English is a prerequisite for any country in order to be a member of the international community. This is not because of the innate superiority of English over other languages but, as claimed by Greenbaum (1996) because of its geographical spread and the prestige and practical value it has gained throughout the United States at present. Historically, English became an international language as a result of Britain's military power. Crystal (2002) stated that a language becomes an international power because of the political and military powers. Thus, according to the same author, the current global status of English is due to two factors: one is the expansion of British colonial power, and the other is the economic status of the United States, which explains the world position of the English language today.



As a consequence of what has been mentioned above, the English language teaching business has increasingly grown around the world in the last few decades as claimed by Crystal (2002:103). Statistically speaking, the number of English language speakers is around 320-380 million people, while the number for those who use it as a second language ranges between 150-300 million. The figure for those who use it as a foreign language is about 100-1,000 million.

The Gulf States are among those who have introduced the English language as a foreign language to graduate students who should be capable of communicating in English to meet the demands of the international markets in the new global village. However, the expectations are not as they should be for many factors. For example, as asserted by Syed (2003) the challenges that face EFL teachers on a daily basis in the Gulf are students' motivation, literacy, underachievement, rote learning, and learning strategies. These challenges, he thinks, have their roots in the contextual framework of language education. Other factors that hold back education in the Gulf, as the same author suggests, are outdated curricula and methodologies, insufficient support system as well as insufficient numbers of qualified teachers. Oman, like the Gulf States, values the English language as a foreign language and may have similar problems.

### ***1.5. Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Oman***

Although the Sultanate of Oman is a relatively young political country and began modernization after the ascendancy of Sultan Qaboos to the throne on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1970, it is one of the oldest states in the Arab world. Geographically it is located in the Tropic of Cancer in the south-east sea corner of the Arabian Peninsula. It has a long coastline about 1,700 kilometers long. It stretches from the Arabian Sea and the entrance to the Indian Ocean and borders the republic of Yemen to the south, Saudi Arabia to the west and the United Arab Emirates to the north. Oman is separated from Iran by the Gulf of Oman and the strategic Strait of Hormuz. This location renders Oman significant as it is strategically positioned as a gateway between the Indian Ocean, East Africa and the Arabian (Persian) Gulf. It is the third largest country in the Arabian Peninsula (309,500 square kilometers) (Ministry of Education: 2006).

Although Oman was not, historically speaking, a British colony, it embraced the idea of English being taught as a foreign language in its institutions. Teaching and

learning English in Oman may be influenced by Omani's cultural and social background. As pointed out by Johnson (2006:237), sociocultural theories claim that the development of human consciousness is dependent on specific social activities where people engage. In what follows, the researcher casts light on the characteristics of the Omani social and cultural background.

The Sultanate of Oman is an Arab and Islamic country. Omanis are considered as one social cohesive unit as a result of a continuous interaction between Arabism and Islam. Being Arabs and Muslims, Omani loyalty is first to Almighty Allah (God), then to their country, the Sultan, the society, Arabic and Islamic nations and to the humankind. Oman has a glorious history which can be traced back in history. Therefore Omanis have a distinguished historical and cultural background. They are aware that faith, science and work are the main routes to progress and development. The Omani society considers family as the basis on which society is founded (Ministry of Education: 2004). Education in Oman should try to maintain all these values. Teaching and learning should consider these factors when designing any model which may be used in the classrooms.

Oman as a rapidly developing country needs increasing numbers of its citizens to learn English to be able to keep up with the 'global village' and not be excluded. As stated by Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi (2012:141) the Sultanate of Oman is among those countries throughout the globe which have valued English language as a very important international language and a means for multi-purpose achievements. As a matter of fact Oman is a relatively young country, therefore, English language teaching (ELT) was introduced to the Omani schools in 1970 when His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said ascended to the throne then and started the present-day Oman (Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi (2012:141). According to a report by the Ministry of Education (2006) Oman had only three schools with 30 teachers and 909 students in 1970. At that time 66% of Oman's adults were illiterate.

The situation has been changed since the arrival of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said and the newly formed government. More than 1,046 public schools have been built and more than 37,500 teachers have been employed to educate around 570,000 students. Since then the education system has undergone many changes to make education more responsive to the Omani future needs. The most recent change that took

place in 1998 was to prepare students to complete 12 years of schooling by providing a Comprehensive Basic Education up to Grade 10 with two years of Post-Basic Education (Grade 11 and 12) to follow. This change aimed at preparing students for tertiary education and for potential jobs and for better lives. It was also aimed at a more learner-centered approach and a critical thinking to encourage the new generations to be able to deal with the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Borg: 2008). Therefore, it is the suitable time to introduce language learning strategies instruction.

According to another report by the Ministry of Education (2008:15), the Post-Basic Education follows the Omani Philosophy of Education and has been designed to cope with the international and national expectations. It was implemented to achieve the following standards:

1. The curriculum and assessment should be internationally recognized.
2. The approach adopted should be student-centred and the activities should develop understanding and problem-solving abilities to encourage students to apply them in a variety of real-life situations.
3. The development of individual differences and special talents should be emphasized.
4. The programme should emphasize the development of employability skills and universal competence.
5. The programme is designed to be flexible in order to permit the ministry or any authoritative bodies to adapt to the changing needs of the community as far as Grade 11 and 12 graduate skills are concerned.

It is worth mentioning that the implementation of the Post-Basic Education system began in the school year 2007/2008.

Despite the above-mentioned ambitious programme that pertains to Post-Basic Education, a considerable number of students who leave Grade 12 and join government and private tertiary education find difficulty in studying in English. Therefore, they must study intensive English courses at foundation programmes despite learning English for nine years (Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi (2012). However, in the new education system, English is introduced from Grade 1 when learners are six years old. In the old curriculum, English started at Grade 4 at the age of 10 (Borg: 2008), it seems that the level of

students does not improve. Al-Issa (2002) cited in Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi (2012:149) attributes this problem to the way English is taught by many teachers, especially non-Omanis. According to him these teachers used to use the Grammar-Translation Method and Audiolingual Methods which encourage rote learning and give priority to product rather than process.

This does not mean that Omani teachers are much better. According to the same author, the Omani teachers, who are mostly Sultan Qaboos University (the only government university in the Sultanate) graduates, were found to be inadequate in terms of linguistics and methodology. This idea contrasts with that of Syed (2003) who thinks that foreign teachers bring diversity to the classroom and some of them use situated pedagogy. Al-Issa attributes the problems of the non-Omani teachers, especially those who are non-Arabs, to the wide gaps between the expatriate educators' background knowledge and that of the local sociocultural communities and languages. From his experience as an expatriate in Oman for more than 20 years the researcher is inclined to agree with Syed. As for the different methodologies that foreign teachers may apply, the situation stated by Al-Issa is not perfect. These teachers are obliged to attend orientation seminars to be aware of the teaching methods and approaches adopted in Oman before they commence teaching. Moreover, they are always under the observation of inspectors and the senior school teacher who are responsible for providing mentoring support. Therefore, the expatriate teachers are not free to choose the teaching methods on their own.

Students' poor performance and output may be attributed to several factors as claimed by Syed (2003). In his opinion, students lack motivation, and they heavily rely on memorization and rote learning. Moreover, the curriculum and methods of teaching are outdated, besides the emphasis on a high-stake testing. Furthermore, teachers are inadequately trained. This claim is applicable also in Oman as asserted by Al Issa (2011).

On the other hand, according to Syed (2003:339) the reliance on foreign teachers has affected negatively the necessary work of training and developing local teachers in the Gulf. This is not the case in Oman which has introduced a significant in-service training to Omani teachers. As pointed out by Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi (2012:144) Omani

teachers outnumber the expatriate teachers and they have been enrolled in special training programmes to improve their skills and knowledge. Training teachers is of vital importance because, as asserted by Nunan (2013:10), there is no use in having the best curriculum in the world without having teachers who are qualified to use it.

Therefore, the researcher suggests that teachers' views towards teaching and learning should be changed and this should be achieved through the reform of teachers' training programmes. As remarked by Johnson (2006) teachers' prior experience, their interpretations of the activities they are engaged in and above all, the contexts within which they work paint the way these teachers teach and how and why they do what they do. In a study conducted by Johnson (1992), she found that the teachers who participated in the study paid more attention to teaching than to learning. That was attributed to the fact that those teachers were inexperienced and lacked practical knowledge. On the other hand, Johnson thinks that experienced teachers have a well-organized knowledge base in terms of students and the classroom setting which enables them to simplify, differentiate and impart information during teaching and are able to make alternative choices without obscuring their teaching. Besides these, as rightly claimed by Zughouli (2003) cited in Al-Issa (2011) the present situation of English as a global language should be changed in approach, methodology, curriculum and perspectives. In this study, the researcher's claim is one of the attempts to start such a reform.

Oman has encouraged private sectors to invest in education, which has led to a proliferation of private universities and colleges. According to Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi (2012:146) Oman has seen the opening of seven private universities and 19 colleges in the last two decades. One of these private universities is the University of Nizwa where the researcher works and has carried out his research. The following section sheds light on this university.

### ***1.5.1 University of Nizwa***

The information in this section is mainly from the University of Nizwa Admission Guide (2010). The University of Nizwa is a non-profit institution. It was established in 2004. The university envisages being a hub for knowledge and enlightenment. It aims at promoting positive thinking, preserving the Omanis Islamic and cultural heritage and identity, faith in Almighty Allah (God) and the loyalty to the country and His Majesty the

Sultan. It plans to educate students and equip them with the knowledge and life skills required to be able to contribute to the betterment of the local community and the whole country. To achieve this ambitious mission and vision, the university needs to develop dynamic integrative programmes to provide high quality academic training and intellectual development.

The university has four colleges. These are the College of Arts & Sciences, The College of Economics, Management & Information Systems, The College of Engineering & Architecture and The College of Pharmacy & Nursing.

The University of Nizwa is an English medium institution; hence a foundation year is considered an academic bridge for the preliminary students to be able to pursue their majors. Students are obliged to enroll first in the Foundation Institute to be able to build the skills of the English language and computer literacy and update scientific knowledge in the sciences and mathematics. As a matter of fact, English language is the most important subject because English is the medium of instruction at the university.

The programme at the Foundation Institute lasts for two semesters, emphasizing English language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing. In order to qualify to start proper academic subjects, students need to score 500 on the TOFEL exam.

The University of Nizwa operates on a semester system. Each semester consists of 17 weeks in fall and spring. For those who wish, there is a third semester in summer for two condensed weeks. The university follows the credit hour system in all the academic programmes.

### ***1.6 Research questions***

The current study is grounded on the theoretical framework of pragmatism as will be explained later and aims to answer the following specific research questions:

- To what extent do teachers perceive their students' frequency use of learning strategies?
- In what way do teachers help learners to utilize learning strategies and to shift from ineffective to the most effective ones?
- What is the effect of English language proficiency on employing language learning strategies?

- What are the language learning strategies reported being utilized by the participants learning English in A foreign language context?
- Would learning strategies instruction lead to awareness of the learning strategies process on the part of students and would it encourage them to apply these strategies beyond the classroom?
- To what extent are students able to operate in the Zone of Proximal Development when receiving assistance needed to learn from teachers and more capable peers?

### ***1.7 Hypothesis***

This project hypothesizes that students whose attentions are turned by their teachers and peers to use a variety of learning strategies and avoid the ineffective ones become better learners and more effective (learning strategies) users than those who are left on their own.

### ***1.8 Research Methods***

To collect the data needed for this study, the researcher intends to use questionnaires, students' portfolios and interviews with some selected teachers and students. As for students' questionnaires, the researcher intends to administer Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), (with some amendments and adaptations to suit the situation) because it is the most frequently used strategy inventory worldwide nowadays. The subjects of the study will be the students of the University of Nizwa where the researcher works, (the Sultanate of Oman). The information will be analyzed quantitatively by SPSS and qualitatively to get an in-depth analysis of the data collected from the subjects. Teachers who teach those students will be also involved in the study. That is to say the researcher intends to apply a mixed methods approach or a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. As stated by Dornyei (2008:43) practicing collecting multiple data types can be traced back to the earliest social research at the turn of twentieth century. However, as the same author asserts, the 1970s witnessed the real breakthrough in the combination of qualitative and quantitative research with the emergence of the concept of 'triangulation' into the social sciences. Moreover, teachers and students will be interviewed to collect more in-depth data and to complement the questionnaire.

### ***1.9 Organization of the Study***

The study is divided into eight chapters. Chapter One is Introduction. Chapters Two, Three and Four are literature review. Chapters Two and Three cover the following topics: the theoretical perspectives on which this study is grounded. These chapters discuss the debate between the cognitive and sociocultural perspectives and the ‘paradigm war’ between the ‘contrasting’ views. The discussion attempts to present the reconciliation between the two perspectives, claiming that they are commensurable and that it is useful for the Applied Linguistics field to put an end to this ‘paradigm war’. Chapter Four discusses the background of teaching methods and introduces teaching methods from historical and theoretical perspectives. Chapter Five describes the research methods adopted. Chapter Six presents the analysis of the data collected using different tools. Chapter Seven includes the discussion of the data collected and its educational implications. Chapter Eight concludes the study and includes recommendations for future research and investigation.

### ***1.10 Aims and Objectives***

The ultimate goal of this study is to make contributions to the teaching of language learning strategies explicitly, that is to say learners should not be left to take care of themselves and choose whatsoever strategies think are effective. Teachers need to learn how their learners learn the language. Moreover, the researcher intends to introduce language learning strategies in a scientific framework based on two theoretical perspectives: sociocultural and cognitive. The research also suggests to create a social context in the classroom and encourage collaborative learning and group work to make it possible for students to exchange experience and language learning strategies and help each other.



## **Chapter Two**

### **2.0. Language Learning Strategies: Theoretical perspectives**

How do students learn? The answer to this question depends on who answers it and where does s/he stand and how does s/he conceptualize learning. As Walsh and Jerks (2010: 2) notice the cognitive second language acquisition (SLA), which is sometimes labeled as the mainstream, learning is meant to be regarded as a change in the cognitive state of individuals. According to this view new language is acquired by an individual effort through a cognitive process when the individual is exposed to a certain input. On the other hand the sociocultural perspective of SLA views learning in a different way. It depends on the process of language learning and the socially-distributed cognition. The assessment of learning varies between the two groups. The former evaluates learning by testing changes that occur to individuals over time by reference to isolated language items while the latter evaluates learning by the comparison of a learner's present ability that s/he shows in scaffolded interaction, explicating the learning in progress, demonstrating the process of socially-distributed cognition and by showing the way they participate. There is another debate that deals with the relationship between different factors such as language use, language learning and language acquisition as pointed out by Firth and Wagner (2007:800).

With these different views about learning and about language, teachers go to classrooms to teach. Therefore how they conceptualize learning may be reflected in how they teach or the methods adopted to teach. These methods may also have their impact on the way these students learn. Learning to be effective may require certain strategies to be employed by learners. The use of these strategies may also be influenced by internal and external factors such as methods of teaching, motivations, students' learning styles and culture, to mention but a few.

The choice of this topic is closely related to the current researcher's observation throughout his career that learners vary in the use of language learning strategies and that teachers vary in the way they view these strategies, perhaps also in the way they teach. This study explores the relationship between teaching methods and the use of learning strategies by learners in a foreign language context.

Recently there has been a great deal in the literature about investigating learning strategies and their role in enhancing learning a second/foreign language. As noticed by Macaro (2001:26), it seems that the worldwide interest in learning strategies has taken place simultaneously with the international development of Communicative Language Learning (CLT).

It is worth mentioning that this concern over language learning strategies has coexisted with the shift of research from the teacher centered to the learner centred approach. Wenden, (1987:3) states that the seventies witnessed a change of focus in the field of second language learning research from the methods of teaching to learner characteristics and their possible effects on the process of acquiring the target language. Moreover, success in second or foreign language learning has been attributed to factors other than teaching methods. For example, Rossiter (2003:1) attributes differential success in second or foreign language learning to individual differences such as intelligence, aptitude, personality, motivation and anxiety. In spite of the research on the language learning strategies used by students, as noticed by Chamot (2011:29), there has been small amount of research concentrating on attempts to take language learning strategies into classroom environment.

The aim of this study, as mentioned above, is to investigate the impact of teaching methods on the use of learning strategies and to scrutinize the extent to which learners need help of teachers and more able peers' help when employing them. Teachers may observe that some learners use them adequately while others use inappropriate ones in a given situation. Therefore, the outcome is obviously different. Many learners may need to be instructed by their teachers to use certain strategies to learn. In fact many teachers may know that what is being taught is not necessarily what is being learnt. As claimed by VanPatten and Williams (2007:23), teaching does not always lead to learning.

However, it seems to be very difficult to know why the teacher's input does not lead to the learner's output. Thus, the ultimate aim of this study is to explore these variables and to contribute to maximizing the importance of strategies instruction and learner training in using efficient strategies.

Although recent years have witnessed a tremendous growth in research on language learning strategies, there is no consensus on the terms ‘learning strategies/learner strategies’. Some authors, for example, Oxford, (1999) use the term ‘learning strategies’ while others, for, instance, Wenden, (1987) use the term ‘learner strategies’. Although these terms have been used somewhat interchangeably as noticed by Chamot and O’Malley (1994:371), there are some scholars who attempt to distinguish between the two terms; McDonough, for example, in an interview conducted by Archibald (2006:63) about learner strategies states that he prefers the term ‘learner strategies’ because the term learning strategies, as he thinks, is more restricted. He points out that learners may perform many actions that have no direct contribution to their learning in spite of having contribution to their use of the language and to their capability of monitoring what they are doing.

On one hand, Macaro (2001:19), views ‘learner strategies’ as those strategies which are employed by learners to assist them to carry out all the tasks that are related to language. On the other hand ‘learning strategies’ are those pro-active strategies where a learner exerts an effort to help himself/herself accomplish something new, such as noticing a new pattern in language while listening to someone speaking. Chamot and O’Malley (1994:371), however, view ‘learner strategies’ as strategies that learners have developed on their own to facilitate learning language. In their opinion the term ‘learning strategies’ refers to those strategies which have been or could be taught explicitly as part of instruction whether in the first or second language contexts. The researcher is of the opinion that the term ‘learning strategies’ is more comprehensive and covers all the activities and efforts exerted by learners, as well as learners’ thoughts and behaviours used to enhance their learning or retain new information. They could have been developed on their own, or explicitly taught or learnt by the help of a ‘good language learner’ or a more able peer. Therefore the term ‘learning strategies’ will be used by the researcher throughout the research except for those quoted.

In this section, the researcher will discuss different definitions as viewed by some authors cited in Macaro (2001:17): “Learning Strategies are the behaviours and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning that are intended to influence the learner’s encoding process.” (Weinstein and Mayer 1986).

“Learning Strategies are techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information,” (Chamot 1987:71)

“Learner Strategies refers to language learning behaviours learners actually engage in to learn and regulate the learning of a second language... what they know about the strategies they use.....” (Wenden, 1987:6)

“Specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations.” (Oxford 1990:8)

The difficulty in defining the term learning strategies seems to lie in the word ‘strategy’ itself because of its loose, non-specific meaning. Oxford, (1990:17) claims that there is no consensus on exactly what strategies are; how many of them exist and how they should be defined, demarcated, and classified. ‘Strategy’ is defined by the Oxford Dictionary of English, (2003:1747) as: 1. a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim. 2. art of planning and directing overall military operations and movements in a war or battle, which is often contrasted with tactics. Also the concept of strategy as noticed by Ellis (1994) is also a vague one and is not easy to tie down because it is used with somewhat different meanings. However, the definition offered by Ellis (1994:529) can be considered, in the researcher’s opinion, as a dictum which may pull the matter together. According to his definition, a strategy consists of a mental or behavioural activity that is related to some specific stage in the overall language acquisition or language use processes. This definition covers observable and non-observable activities that students employ to facilitate learning. Those who have investigated what came to be known as ‘learning strategies’ distinguished between three types of strategies, production, communication and learning. For example, Tarone (1980:419-421) considers production and communication strategies as strategies for language use while she considers language learning strategies as an attempt to improve linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language. One may ask, whether it is easy to distinguish between these different types of strategies. The answer comes from Tarone herself who states that, although these distinctions are essential, they are not applicable by virtue of the fact that they rest on learners’ intentions, which are difficult to establish. She has noticed that it is

difficult to discover whether a strategy is motivated by a desire to learn or a desire to communicate. In other words, she thinks that the relation between communication strategies and learning strategies is important. Although several researchers have tried to suggest that learning may result from use of communication strategies, Tarone thinks that such a distinction is difficult to make. The researcher thinks that the strategies used for communication may be used for a short term purpose e.g. during a conversation with a native speaker. Learning strategies, on the other hand, are used for long term purposes, that is to say to facilitate learning.

Two further types of learning strategies are: language learning strategies and skill learning strategies as claimed by Ellis (1994:530). Macaro (2006:320) also suggests differentiating strategies from skills, processes and styles. Moreover, Cohen (1998) tries to separate strategies employed by a second language learner when learning a language or when using a language. Thus, the inconsistencies in the literature on learning strategies are justified due to the different views authors have as far as the term strategy is concerned. Another important point worth mentioning is that these authors have not stated clearly whether or not these strategies are observable by other people, e.g. teachers, nor whether they are conscious or subconscious. However, a closer look at these definitions reveals that some of the strategies are conscious, e.g. behaviour while others are subconscious, e.g. thought.

Moreover, none of them has mentioned how learners learn these strategies. Do they find them independently with a natural ability or do they transfer them from their early experience in learning their mother tongue or should they be taught and instructed by their teachers? As Nunan (1995:134) pointed out that it is not right to take for granted that learners come into the language classroom naturally equipped to make their own choices about what is learning and how it occurs. Nunan, also thinks that there are comparatively few learners who are naturally gifted and able to make informed choices about what to learn, how to learn it and the suitable time for learning (2013:53). Although Nunan was not discussing learning strategies per se, his arguments are applicable to learning strategies. This inconsistency in the definition of learning strategies led some scholars to question the existence of learning strategies themselves. For example, Dornyei (2005:163) raised such a question. Although, he states that he believes in the

existence of learning strategies, he is apprehensive about the absence of a clear-cut theoretical classification of the learning strategies concept

As mentioned earlier, it would be difficult to reach an agreement on one definition, since the word ‘strategy’ itself is fuzzy and can be interpreted differently by different authors. Moreover, learning itself is processed differently by different learners. Dornyei also claimed that learning strategies are not considered factors of individual differences because they are equated with learners’ actions/behaviours and thoughts. He asserted that actions and thoughts are not part of individual differences, however, he does not explain why (2005).

Another opponent of the language learning strategies is Swan (2008:262) who ferociously criticizes learning strategies in terms of definition, classification and the idea of teaching them to students. He starts his attack by stating that the notion of ‘strategy’ is not always well defined. However, as noticed by the author himself this is not a problem in the field of Applied Linguistics. In spite of this, Swan (2008) questions how to delimit the notion of ‘strategy’ to serve the purposes of teaching them usefully to students. The researcher claims that this remark does not make any difference. For example, as pointed out by DeCarrico and Larsen-Freeman (2002:19) the word ‘grammar’ is conceptualized differently by different people.

This does not mean the notion of ‘grammar’ is not well defined or that grammar should not be taught until it is well defined or well classified. One feels that Swan is contradicting himself because although he argues that training in strategy use can lead to learner independence, he thinks that the strategy training can be taken to unconstructive extreme. He also says that such training should not be a substitute for basic language teaching. Learning strategies instruction is not a substitute for basic teaching, but it may supplement the basic teaching. Learning strategies instruction can be integrated into the language curriculum or taught separately as pointed out by Chamot (2008:273). In spite of his fierce attack and critical tone, Swan (2008:271) is not completely against teaching language learning strategies. He thinks that before teaching these strategies, they should be really teachable and clearly focused and conceivably influential. For the learning strategies to be teachable and clearly focused, the researcher presents them within a

scientific framework and suggests a teacher's guide which could be followed and amended by teachers to suit their own environment.

The researcher has noticed that the teaching methods adopted may determine teachers' attitudes towards learning strategies. That is to say the teacher may be influenced, for example, by the Behaviourism Approach, which views language as a habit formation, or the Cognitive Approach. Behaviourism Approach shared with the structural linguists a scientific view which was grounded on the importance of physical events, thus rejecting the idea of some unobservable, abstract entity such as mind being involved in learning (Johnson, 2008:48). The supporters of the latter theory, on the contrary, are interested in the mental processes that are involved in learning, which includes how people build up and draw upon their memories and how learners actively participate in the process of learning. Therefore, where teachers stand may determine how they view language learning strategies.

It is important to note that learners vary in using learning strategies. Many students may desperately need teachers' intervention to a great extent to effectively use these strategies. The current researcher argues that the greater the intervention of teachers the more appropriately learners will use learning strategies. In other words, if learners are left to their own devices, they may use inappropriate strategies and hence the output may not be adequate. Perhaps the question be raised here is whether or not these strategies are observable or not. As far as learning strategies are concerned, the strategies used in reading and writing are observable. For example, learners may underline words or consult their dictionaries, all of which can be observed. However, in listening and speaking it is difficult to observe the strategies employed by learners because these strategies may not be witnessed directly.

### ***2.1 Classifications of Learning Strategies***

Learning strategies are also classified differently by some scholars. For example, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) divide them into meta-cognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies. Oxford (1990a) offers a complementary perception on the taxonomy of learning strategies. First she divides them into two major classes: direct and indirect strategies. She then further subdivides each into a total of six groups. These are

Memory strategies: these are used by students to help them remember new vocabulary, grammar rules or any new language items. Cognitive strategies: these help learners think about and comprehend the new language items they study. Compensation strategies: these strategies are employed by learners to help them compensate for lack of knowledge.

Metacognitive strategies: these strategies help students to regulate their own cognition by evaluating how they are progressing in their learning and for planning for future work.

Affective strategies: these strategies indicate how students feel about the target language and indicate their feeling towards the speakers of the target language. Social strategies: these strategies are utilized by learners who interact with other people inside or outside the classrooms. This study adopts Oxford's (1990:17) classification; therefore, her classification will be presented in detail below.

Oxford (1990:17) divides learning strategies into two broad categories.

I. Direct Strategies. These are further divided into:

1. Memory strategies. These are subdivided into four subgroups which are:
  - a) creating mental linkages
  - b) applying images and sounds
  - c) reviewing well
  - d) employing action
2. Cognitive strategies. These include: a) practicing b) receiving and sending messages c) analyzing and reasoning d) creating structure for input and output.
3. Compensation strategies. These include: a) guessing intelligently b) overcoming limitations in speaking and writing

II. Indirect Strategies. These are also further divided into:

1. Metacognitive strategies which are composed of a) centering your learning b) arranging and planning your learning c) evaluating your learning
2. Affective strategies include: a) lowering your anxiety b) encouraging yourself c) taking your emotional temperature
3. Social strategies which are made of a) asking questions b) cooperating with others c) emphasizing with others.

(source Oxford 1990:17)

Although the notion of strategic learning is still of a great interest for theoreticians and practitioners, the role of teachers and teaching regarding learning strategies used by



students is absent. This gap was pointed out by Macaro (2001) who stated that when he first started reading and hearing about learner strategies he was struck by the absence of the words ‘teacher’ and ‘teaching’.

Learners also differ in using metacognitive or cognitive strategies quoting O’Malley and Chamot above. Based on the researcher’s experience he can say that those learners who are engaged in using metacognitive strategies such as selective attention, planning, monitoring and evaluation are good learners because they are aware of what they are doing and how they are learning. Moreover, the use of social/affective strategies is determined by learners’ background culture and it is also gender related. Research on gender related matter yields different findings, for example, Oxford (1993). The current researcher is of the opinion that learners should be trained and taught how to learn appropriately and not to be left alone to search for themselves learning strategies that they need.

A closer look at the above classifications reveals that both Oxford’s and O’Malley and Chamot’s are applicable. They both classify learning strategies into subdivisions. For example, Oxford (1990:20) as mentioned above, divides strategies into direct and indirect strategies and further divides the former into memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies. She then divides the latter into metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. These are divided further into more detailed categories. In the researcher’s view the above categories make it easy for teachers to apply them in the classrooms. For instance, students can be trained to centre their learning by encouraging them to overview and link the recently taught materials with previously known ones. Teachers may also encourage learners to arrange and plan their learning by finding out about language learning; by organizing; by setting goals and objectives; by identifying the purpose of a language task; by planning for a language task and then seeking practice opportunities.

In addition to this, learners can be trained to evaluate their own learning which can be achieved by self-monitoring and self- evaluating. The second example is drawn from O’Malley and Chamot’s classification (1999:119). According to them, Cognitive Strategies are classified into resourcing, repetition, grouping, deduction and imagery.

Teachers can urge their students to use target language reference materials such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, or textbooks.

Moreover, learners can be encouraged to imitate a language model, including overt practice and silent rehearsal. Teachers may train them to classify words, terminology, or concepts according to their attributes or meaning. Learners may also be urged to apply rules to understand or produce the second language or make up rules based on language analysis. Training learners to use visual images to understand or remember new information is also possible. Furthermore, teachers may train learners to plan back in their mind the sound of a word, phrase, or longer sequence. Thus the classifications given by Oxford and O'Malley and Chamot are both practical and applicable both inside classrooms and outside the classrooms.

Moreover, as noticed by Griffiths and Parr (2001:247) language learning strategies theory can fit comfortably with almost all methods and approaches of language teaching. For example, memory and cognitive strategies can go alongside the development of the vocabulary and grammar knowledge of Grammar-translation Method. These same strategies may be used with Audiolingualism which encourages patterning of automatic responses. Moreover, learning from errors, which was developed from inter-language theory may involve cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Compensation and social strategies match communicative competence theory and Communicative Language teaching. Affective strategies also can be use with Suggestopedia. This suggests that language learning strategies theory does not contrast with any method or approach, implying that it has the potential to be a useful component of contemporary eclectic syllabuses. Furthermore, these strategies, especially as classified by Oxford (1990:17) can be presented within the framework of cognitive and sociocultural theories as will be discussed later. In other words teachers, whatsoever methods they adopt, could be trained to teach learning strategies.

It is important to mention that there are various factors which affect the choice of learning strategies employed by second language learners as the following section reveals.

### ***2.3 Various Factors that Affect the Choice of Learning Strategies***

The body of work in learning strategies suggests a correlation between the use of learning strategies and various factors. For example, Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) show the correlation between English language proficiency and the use of learning strategies and between high strategy use and motivation. Also, in a study conducted among Egyptian adults, Schmidt et al. (1996) find correlations between motivation, age, gender, and language proficiency. They find the English Proficiency to be the most important of these factors. According to Ehrman and Oxford (1989) females use more strategies than males. They also claimed that there is a relationship between strategy choice and style. Kaylani (1996) has probed the strategy choice of adult students in Jordan. The findings indicate that both gender and motivation correlate in complex ways to learning strategy frequencies. There are other factors, such as culture, age, experience and teaching methods, to name but a few.

The focus of research has recently turned to the learners and the ways in which they learn. Since Teaching methods and the English language proficiency are concerned with this study, the next section casts light on language teaching methods and English language proficiency and their relation to language learning strategies.

### ***2.4 Language Teaching Methods and Learning Strategies***

According to Oxford (1990b) English language teaching methods, and other unuttered expectations in the environment of teaching often impact the choice of language learning strategies. Sutter (1987) cited in Oxford (1990b) argued that the more learners remain in a language programme, the more they are inclined to choose the language learning strategies conscientiously suggested by the instructional methods. Moreover, Politzer (1983) also cited by the same author noticed that there is a correlation between language teaching methods and learning strategies for university students learning foreign languages. Nunan (2002) thinks that strategy training leads to a great sensitivity to the learning process. Oxford (2002:124) suggests that ESL teachers can help their students be aware of the power of deliberately using language learning strategies in order to make learning faster, easier, and more efficient and more fun.

In spite of the impact of teaching methods on the choice of language learning strategies, the majority of language teachers are not interested in knowing their students' learning strategies (Oxford, 1990b). Chapter Four casts more light on teaching methods.

### ***2.5 English Language Proficiency***

Language proficiency is defined by Richards and Schmidt (2010:321) as "the degree of skill with which a person can use a language, such as how well a person can read, write, speak, or understand language." In their opinion, it is different from language achievement, which they define as "language ability as a result of learning". Similarly Murray and Christian (2011:197) define language proficiency as a scale on which the scope of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing could be rated. The proficiency levels can be set in levels such as basic, independent user and proficient user. Proficiency can be measured by a proficiency test such as TOEFL (The Test of English as a Foreign Language), TOEIC (The Test of English for International Communication) and IELTS (The International English Language Testing System), Murray and Christian (2011:197). For some, vocabulary knowledge is an essential part of language proficiency which is often evaluated as part of "classroom-internal, institutional, and standardized tests, (Hall and Duran: 2009). Fewell (2010:159) argues that learners' language proficiency determines the extent to which they utilize the learning strategies, i.e. the low proficiency and high proficiency learners employ these strategies differently. Much research was carried out to investigate the relationship between language proficiency and using language learning strategies. For example, Green and Oxford (1995) investigate whether high proficiency students use learning strategies more frequently, while Park (1997) cited in (Song, 2005:6) probe whether students who use learning strategies more frequently are more proficient. The current study investigates the impact of proficiency on the use of learning strategies. Learning strategies instruction mainly encourages autonomous learning which entails teaching students what to learn and how to learn. The next section is about learning to learn.

### ***2.6 Learning to learn***

Learning to learn is not as simple and easy a task as the term implies. It demands a great deal of effort from both teachers and learners. It requires one, in the researcher's point of view, to train learners explicitly in how to use learning strategies effectively and

why they should use them. In other words, learning to learn means equipping learners with the skills that may help them to depend on themselves and become autonomous learners or “strategically self-regulated learners”, as termed by Oxford (2011:11). One of the major tasks of schools recently is to prepare students for lifelong learning as suggested by Giest and Lompscher (2003:267). In order to achieve this, they insist on enabling students to learn to think in an independent and efficient way. This may encourage them to contribute to language learning and develop learner training activities. To achieve the above goals, there should be a focus on explicitly teaching learners the techniques of learning a foreign language and directing them on how and when to use learning strategies, as suggested by Williams and Burden (1997:147)

The researcher argues that the explicit teaching of strategies could be vital. Students who choose learning strategies by themselves may risk using inappropriate ones in a given situation. For example, in learning a foreign language, Arabic speakers may tend to use the strategy of rote learning, which is transferred from the way they used to memorize the Holy Qura'an and Prophet Mohammed's *ahadith* (sayings) in their youth. Therefore, these learners may learn grammatical rules by heart but fail to use them correctly in writing or speaking. In other words the learning that occurs as a result of rote learning does not lead to acquisition because inappropriate strategies are employed in specific situations. Willing (1987) cited in Chen (2007:20) attributes the problems learners encounter to the use of inadequate or inappropriate learning strategies. To help learners develop their own learning strategies which are appropriate for their needs, which suit their own learning styles and enable them to become effective language learners, they should receive guidance on how to reflect on their own learning. (Murray and Christison: 2011:14).

Central to the learning situation is the fact that, teachers should not only be concerned with the product of their learners only, but also with the process or the way they learn. In addition to this, they should notice the relationship between what their learners can do independently and in collaboration with others or their learners' zone of proximal development (ZPD) as will be explained later. Collaborative learning is defined by (Macaro 1997:134) as encouraging learners to achieve general learning objectives by working together, and showing that they value each other's language input rather than

merely relying on the teacher. In such classrooms, the role of the teacher is to facilitate learning. Collaborative learning may also enhance learning to learn and help students to become autonomous learners.

It is important to highlight here that some teachers may not encourage collaborative learning, they may either think it is useless or may think that collaborated learning may affect negatively the teacher's class management. Macaro (1997:1350) argues that the teacher's attitude towards collaborative learning may affect positively or negatively on the learners. Macaro (1997:136) distinguished between three different types of collaboration. The first one is teacher directed collaboration, which is the commonest, in which the teacher has already planned for a particular type of class behaviour or group behaviour.

The second is the learner directed collaboration which takes place rarely. Here the learners are given freedom (by the teacher) to form a group in order to practice a scene that may copy a real life scenario outside the classroom. The last one is learner generated collaboration which is the least favoured by teachers because it is covert or semi-covert.

## ***2.7 Learning Styles***

Students' learning styles may determine their choice of learning strategies; therefore, it is very important for the teachers to be aware of their students' learning styles. As claimed by Sims and Sims (1995:xi) for the effective learning to take place, instructors should acknowledge the diversity of learning styles and provide the suitable conditions of learning inside and outside of the classroom through flexible teaching methods that take into consideration learning differences and give chances of success for their learners. According to Young and Sachdev (2007:234) learning style is very essential for the current pedagogy. They claimed that it has been excessively used by researchers these days, that is to say more than 300 studies have used 'learning styles' in lists of keywords between 200-2006. This indicates the importance the authors give to its weight at present time. Learning style as asserted by the same authors is prominent in a wide range of educational field including language learning pedagogy.

Learning style is defined by Oxford (1990b) as the learner's favoured manner of treating new information, and it includes what may be called a cognitive style. It is essential, as pointed out by Pritchard (2009:42), to notice that learning styles are not

stable but they are changeable and students may adopt different types of styles according to the context. There are three particular learning styles. These are visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. Visual learners as the name suggests, learn by seeing, while auditors prefer learning by listening. The kinaesthetic learners learn by doing (Pritchard: 2009). Thus teachers should be aware of their students' learning styles to be able to choose a method that suits them, for example, some students may like to do the work alone, while others may like to do the work in group and so on. Having presented factors that may affect the choice of language learning strategies; the discussion turns to the theoretical bases of language learning strategies.

Having said this, it seems important to focus on learning strategies within a theoretical framework as proposed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990). The following sections casts light on this theoretical framework.

### ***2.8 Learning Strategies within a Theoretical Framework***

According to O'Malley and Chamot (1999:42-43) the two paradigms that exemplify second language acquisition are linguistics and cognitive psychology. The former views language as being learned independently from cognitive skills, operating according to different principles from most learned behaviour as pointed out by Spolsky (1985) in O'Malley and Chamot (1999:16). The advocates of this assumption attempt to analyze some aspects of language, e.g. unique language properties, such as developmental language order, grammar and knowledge of structure and they tend to distinguish between language learning and language acquisition as stated by Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis. In fact, Krashen has been criticized for his unclear definitions of what constitutes conscious versus subconscious processes which are difficult to verify in practice (Mitchell and Myles, 1989:36). Krashen (1982) argues that learning only functions as an editor and that it only comes to make changes in the form of speech after it has been uttered by the acquired system, whereas acquisition initiates the speaker's utterances and it is responsible for fluency. This view contradicts the behaviourists' view as explained above.

As asserted by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) this paradigm is not suitable for explaining the role of cognitive processes in second language learning because the underlying theories fail to treat cognition and learning in the context of the larger and

more extensive body of theory and research that has developed in cognitive psychology. Cognitive processes have also been marginalized by these theorists as asserted by (Wong Fillmore and Swain 1984) cited in O'Malley and Chamot (1999:17). It is also worth mentioning that these theories have not addressed learning strategies, which are considered one of the principles of cognitive processes.

The second paradigm is influenced by cognitive psychology. It is based partly on information processing and partly on studies and theories that evolved many years ago to explain the role of cognitive processes in learning. The second paradigm also ignores sociocultural theory. It is based on cognitive psychology and information processing, which was borrowed from the way computers process information.

Developments in the fields of linguistics and psychology have given a fresh impetus for language learning strategies advocates. They have started searching for a theory which can encompass learning strategies to guide their studies and investigations into the nature of second language learning and the influence of learning strategies on the learning process of the target language. For example, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) established a theoretical framework based on a comprehensive model of cognitive skill learning influenced by Anderson's (1983, 1985) information processing theory of cognition and memory. The information processing framework suggests that information is stored in two different ways: short-term memory and long-term memory. In this way, new information is acquired through a few stage encoding processes involving selection, acquisition, construction and integration (O'Malley and Chamot, 1999:17).

O'Malley and Chamot stress that second language acquisition should be understood as a cognitive skill (1999:19). They also emphasize the value of the theoretical framework approach by mentioning the advantages of the approach. These are as follows:

- There has recently been considerable research in cognitive skill acquisition in disciplines such as cognitive psychology and in the information processing aspects of computer sciences, for example Long (1998) in Ellis (2010). Applying these relevant theories and models to the study of second language acquisition provides us with a comprehensive



and well-specified theoretical framework that is consistent with related work.

- Viewing second language acquisition as a cognitive skill is to say that the level of specificity and the 'dynamic' or 'process' orientation of models of skill acquisition will allow to provide more of a detailed process view of second language acquisition as a cognitive skill – more than what is provided by most of the current models of second language learning.
- Viewing language acquisition as a cognitive skill provides a mechanism for describing how language ability can be improved.

According to the above view, it can be seen that a great emphasis is placed on the role of learners who are supposed to participating actively in the learning process. In other words, the responsibility for learning is shifted from teachers to learners. This is the junction at which cognitive approach components and behaviourists separate. In the view of the latter, language learning is to acquire a set of habits, and that these habits should be free from errors which are labeled as "bad habits". In order to achieve this goal, teachers should inculcate in learners good language habits, which can be carried out by pattern drills, memorizations of dialogues or chorusing structural patterns (Williams and Burden, (1997:10). This is why behaviourists adopt the teacher-centred approach while cognitive components choose the learner-centred one.

Although one may say O'Malley and Chamot successfully put learning strategies on right track by drawing on strategies which are based on the theory of information processing, it can be noticed that they ignore the social aspect of learning.

## ***2.9 Cognitive Psychology Paradigm***

Weinstein and Mayer, (1986) reported in O'Malley and Chamot, (1999:17) claim that in the cognitive psychology paradigm, new information is processed via a four-stage encoding process which involves selection, acquisition, construction, and integration. The selection process enables learners to focus on specific information of interest in the learning environment, and then transfer that information to the short-term memory (where information received is stored for a short period of time). In the second stage, i.e. acquisition, learners actively transfer information from the short-term memory into the

long-term memory, there to be stored permanently. The third stage seems to be an especially important one because learners actively build internal connection between ideas contained in the short-term memory. At this point the information from the long-term memory can be utilized to enrich the learner's understanding or retention of new ideas by the provision of related information or background knowledge into which new ideas can be arranged. In the final stage, or integration, learners play an active role by searching for prior knowledge in the long-term memory (where information received is stored permanently) and then transferring this knowledge to the short-term memory. These four stages play different and important roles in learning processes. Selection and acquisition determine the amount of information learnt, while construction and integration determine what is learnt and in what way it is organized.

Questions posed here as to whether learners should decide for themselves which learning strategies they employ or whether teachers should intervene and direct them to utilize the efficient strategies. O'Malley and Chamot, (1999:18) claim that the role of learning strategies in the above mentioned formulation is to make explicit what otherwise may take place subconsciously or may occur in an inappropriate way during early stages of learning.

### ***2.10 Linguistic Theory***

Linguistic theory as argued by Mitchell and Myles, (1998:43) is not concerned with the learning of a second language. It attempts to investigate what constitutes knowledge of language, how this knowledge is acquired and how knowledge of language is put to use. Knowledge of language means the subconscious mental representation of language which triggers the use of languages. Language theory also aims at describing the mental representations of language which are retained in the human mind. In addition to this, it aims to find out what all human languages have in common. Moreover, it investigates the uniqueness of human languages and what distinguishes them from other systems of communication. The publication of Noam Chomsky's 'Syntactic Structures' (1957) was the turning point in the field of linguistics and psychology.

That was the beginning of the shift from structural linguistics to generative linguistics. The former was based on the description of the surface structure of language, while the latter emphasized the rule-governed and creative nature of human language,

(Mitchell and Myles1998:25). An approach that best represents linguistic theory is Universal Grammar (UG) initiated by Chomsky. UG as defined by Richards et al (1996:392) is a theory which claims the grammatical competence of every adult regardless of the language they speak. It also claims that every speaker knows a set of principles which applies to all languages, they also know a set of parameters which may vary from one language to another, but this variety takes place within certain limits. According to UG, children acquire their mother tongue innately. That is to say certain principles of the human mind are, to some extent, biologically determined and specialized for language learning. Although the application of UG theory was mainly in the domain of first language acquisition, recent work has witnessed an interest in second language acquisition, (McLaughlin 1987:91). For example, Cook, (1996:153) claims that UG has increasingly been used to find out how second languages are learnt, mainly by those who are interested in the linguistic perspective. The UG model claims that the principles and parameters which are considered as the elements or properties of all human languages are built into the mind. What learners, as noticed by Cook (1996:153-154), need to learn is not the structure of the language, as their minds mechanically enforce it on whatever language they learn, be it English, Chinese, or Arabic, what they need to learn are the parameter settings.

According to this claim what learners need to learn is a set of parameters. The researcher, from his own experience, thinks that this is not the case in the second language learning contexts. Despite being exposed to correct grammatical utterances, either in written or spoken form, learners produce ungrammatical sentences.

### ***2.11. Information Processing Models***

The information processing models were developed by cognitive psychologists and were later used by language learning specialists who are concerned with the way in which people take in information to process it and then act upon it. Therefore, as pointed out by Williams and Burden (1997:15), factors such as attention, perception and memory are the main concerns for information processing theorists. These scholars construct models in order to account for the way the human minds work. At this juncture, learning strategies, which include memory strategies, find their way to the information processing models. This study will discuss two of these models: McLaughlin's and Anderson's.

Much weight will be placed on the latter because of its application to the field of learning strategies as set forth by O'Malley and Chamot (1990). This section will cast light on the factors that embody the information processing approach and then discuss the models.

### ***2.12. Attention***

Common sense tells us that attention plays a vital role in the learning process. In other words, learners who pay attention to what teachers say learn better and teachers who are able to draw students' attention to what they say are good teachers. What is meant by 'attention'? According to Richards et al (1999:24) is "the ability a person has to concentrate on something, or part of something, while ignoring other things...In learning theory the attention phase is regarded as the first stage in learning." The central point that this definition stresses is that when processing the incoming information, a person should be selective. Therefore, learners who fail to follow their lectures attentively and selectively may not be able to employ the strategies of taking and making notes appropriately. As asserted by Williams and Burden, (1997:15) learners who have considerable difficulty in paying attention to their work will encounter a negative effect on their learning. Some questions arise as to why learners differ so much in attention and what the teacher can do to help.

This scope of diversity in learners' attention places great demands on teachers by virtue of the central role that attention plays in the learning process. There are different views in dealing with this area. One of these is Klatzky's view. Klatzky (1980) cited in Williams and Burden (1997:15) conceived of the process of attention as filtering out an overwhelming range of incoming stimuli and selecting out only important stimuli for further processing. Another view (Best 1986) as quoted by Williams and Burden (1997:15) "conceptualizes attention as a cognitive resource which can be drawn upon as a means of concentrating our mental efforts." The former conceives of attention as a filter and according to this view attention is processed selectively and purposefully when the learner is aware of what s/he is doing, while the latter views attention as being executed subconsciously which is similar to procedural knowledge.

### ***2.13. Memory***

There is a significant body of research among information processing theorists that explores memory. However there is no consensus about the word 'memory'. Smith

(1977:44) argues that the word ‘memory’ is used in a variety of ways, to refer to what degree people can store new information in their minds, how well it can be retained therein and how well information can be retrieved. Psychologists, such as Atkinson and Shiffrin (1986) distinguish between different aspects of memory: sensory store, short-term (or working) memory and long-term memory. This division of memory into different aspects has practical implications in learning a language as suggested by Williams and Burden (1999:16). The researcher thinks that learners can best employ learning strategies to enhance their memories and become better at storing and retrieving information successfully on the condition that appropriate learning strategies are utilized.

#### ***2.14 McLaughlin’s Information Processing Model***

McLaughlin views second language learning as the acquisition of a complex cognitive skill. In other words, to learn a second language is to learn a skill, since different aspects of the task must be practiced and integrated into fluent performance. To achieve this, components of sub-skills need to be automatized. Learning is a cognitive process. He is of the opinion that learners play an active and important part in learning. He also asserts that as performance improves, there is continuous restructuring as learners try to simplify, unify and gain increasing control over their internal representations. (McLaughlin: 1987). This view is the opposite of what language and Behaviourism theorists advocate. The former believes that children learn their first language quickly and effectively because they are assisted by an innate language faculty which guides them (Mitchell and Myles, 1998:44) while the latter view language learning as a habit formation as explained above.

#### ***2.15 Anderson’s Information Processing Model***

Anderson’s model is also based on cognitive psychology. This model which is called Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT) is not dissimilar to McLaughlin’s. Although the two models use different terminology, they have something in common. In both models practice leading to automatization is considered to have a central role. In other words practice enables declarative knowledge (or knowledge what) to become procedural knowledge (or knowledge how). Anderson, unlike McLaughlin, divides memory into three types. Short-term memory (STM), and two kinds of long-term memories (LTM), a declarative LTM and a procedural LTM. Anderson views declarative and procedural

knowledge as different types of knowledge. Many experienced teachers notice that knowing about the language, that is to say having the declarative knowledge, is different from knowing how to use the language, i.e. procedural knowledge. For example, learners can memorize a lot of grammatical rules, but fail to apply them to their writing and speaking.

Drawing on this distinction, teachers should always try to help their learners to 'move' from declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge. According to Anderson's information processing model, as noticed by Ellis, (1994:389), the pivotal points to consider are the theoretical claim that learning begins with declarative knowledge which gradually becomes proceduralized by practice. A claim superficially similar to this is the behaviourist views of learning which encourage teachers to develop in learners good language habits by pattern drills, memorization of dialogues or choral repetition of structural patterns. Language items should have been well practiced and the appropriate habit should have been acquired before the explanation of any rule, (Williams and Burden, 1999:10).

Thus practice plays a central role in both views. However, practice is viewed differently by the two schools. On one hand, the ACT model encourages learners to participate actively to transform declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge through practice. Ellis (1994:388) argues that this transition takes place in three stages. In the first stage (declarative stage) information is stored as facts which have no ready-made activation procedures. In other words learners may be aware of some facts but fail to apply this awareness to conversations. Many teachers may notice that students who know subject-verb concord fail to produce correct sentences in conversation. In the second stage - or the associative stage, learners try to elicit rules, for example, add *-ed* to a base form to generate a past tense verb. This stage may witness the construction of incorrect sentences as a result of overgeneralization. The final stage is the autonomous stage. In this stage, procedures become increasingly automated, and the mind propels the learner to generalize constructions and also to discriminate more specifically when certain constructions can be used. For instance, learners are able to distinguish between regular and irregular verbs.

On the other hand, practice, as viewed by behaviourists, is a drawback. Williams and Burden, (1999:10), claim that the role of the learners according to behaviourists is a passive one because they are merely instructed to respond correctly to stimuli. They are not given opportunities to analyze the language, or to develop their own learning strategies to learn appropriately. Moreover, behaviourists ignore what goes on inside the learners' minds or how they process information. Errors are seen as formation of bad habits by this school, therefore learning from mistakes is not allowed.

Having shed light on the ACT and its relation to the Information Processing Model, the discussion turns to learning strategies within the framework of the ACT model as indicated by O'Malley and Chamot, (1999). To begin with, strategies are viewed by Anderson as being like any other complex skill, and are described as a set of productions which are combined and fine-tuned until they are transformed into procedural knowledge, (O'Malley and Chamot, 1999:43). A closer look at this view reveals that learning strategies are teachable, applicable and practicable.

A point which is worth mentioning is that the aforementioned view which dominated SLA prior to the 1990s. As stated by Anthony and Scarino (2013:32), SLA was mainly viewed as an individual cognition matter which processed in the learner's mind, spurred by the input which may activate general cognitive processes. After that sociocultural perspective comes into play in the domain of SLA. Whether cognition and sociocultural views are reconcilable or irreconcilable will be discussed later.

Having shed light on the cognitive perspective, in what follows, the researcher discusses the rationale for learning strategies instruction from a sociocultural point of view which is based on Vygotsky's social cognitive theory. He then suggests teaching language strategies within the framework of these perspectives. In the current researcher's point of view the role of cognitive processes in learning cannot be denied and at the same time the social aspect of language is essential and therefore he thinks when these two perspectives are combined it would be a step forward in the field of second language acquisition and in applied linguistics. Larsen-Freeman (2010:67) suggests ways to unify the conceptualization views in applied linguistics. The first approach, which occupied the applied linguistics domain for some time is to perceive language learning as a process of taking language form which she called 'having' view, the other approach views

language as "developing discursive routines through participation in speech discourse communities." She has called this conceptualization as the 'doing' view. In her opinion "one's language resources emerge from locally-situated, culturally-embedded, and discursively-patterned uses." Myles (2010) also claims that second language is, like the language itself, a multifaceted phenomenon. It is linguistic, cognitive and also social. Therefore, in order to explore its aspects; different theoretical and methodological paradigms are needed. Moreover, Firth and Wagner (2007) foresee an ineluctable sociocultural turning point in the domain of SLA. It is high time to take a practical step towards the new conceptualization. Firth and Wagner (2007:804) claim pessimistically that learning in the domain of SLA is still conceived of as a cognitive process regardless of its context. Competence means grammatical competence, besides etic has advantages over emic and yet learners in classrooms are the same standard data set. However, they add that there is a considerable number of researchers who are opting for adopting emic perspectives and are attempting to develop cognitive-social approaches to language learning. Therefore, by now presenting language learning strategies within cognitive and sociocultural perspectives now, the current researcher contributes positively to the areas of applied linguistics and second language acquisition.



## **Chapter Three**

### **3.0. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (SCT)**

The study of sociocultural theory has been prominent research in the second/foreign language pedagogies. Lantolf (2000:1) considers the most important concept of SCT is the mediation of the human mind. According to Wertsch (1985), SCT is a term which referred to Vygotsky and his students that formulates a psychology rooted in Marxism. It offers a framework through which cognition can be investigated in a systematic way as part of the social context. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, as cited by Chamot et al (1999:160), is a theory which suggests that learners benefit by observing how teachers and more able peers approach learning tasks and by receiving scaffolding from teachers. In other words, learners can operate in the Zone of Proximal Development (hereafter ZPD) when they receive help needed to accomplish learning tasks from teachers and more capable peers.

The term ZPD, as suggested by Chaiklin (2003:38), is probably one of the most broadly recognized and famous ideas relating to Vygotsky's scientific publications. Newman and Holzman (1993:52) view the ZPD as Vygotsky's reflection on the relationship between instruction and learning. For these authors, the ZPD is the critical tool-and-result that reveals Vygotsky's Marxist tool-and-result psychological method. The ZPD is the difference between what the individual is able to do alone without any help and what s/he can do when assisted by someone more capable. Vygotsky (1978:86), cited in Lantolf and Appel (1998:10) defined ZPD as "... the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers." The concept of ZPD will be discussed in more detail in section 3.1.4. According to Zuengler and Miller (2006:38), Vygotskian sociocultural theory found its way into second language acquisition (SLA) research in the mid-1980s but gained impetus in the mid-1990s. SCT, as claimed by Kozulin et al (2003:2), gives a new vision of students and portrays teachers differently in terms of role model versus source of knowledge versus mediator and so on. It is worth mentioning that Vygotsky himself rarely used the term 'sociocultural'. Instead, he used 'cultural psychology' or 'cultural-historical psychology', Lantolf and Beckett (2009:459). Wertsch

(1985:30) goes as far as to say that Vygotsky's arguments about sociocultural history were mainly theoretical and depended on the writings of other scholars. There is a distinct contrast between Wertsch's claim and that of Lantolf's (1994:418) who asserts that the sociocultural theory of the mind was developed by Vygotsky and his colleagues. Relying on different researchers, for example, Zuengler and Miller (2006), Lantolf (1994), and (2011) and what Wertsch (1985:30) himself stated by claiming that Vygotsky's ideas about the genetic domain played a very important role in the formation of his approach which was often referred to, in the former USSR, as the "sociohistorical" or "cultural-historical" approach to the study of mind . One may say with confidence that sociocultural theory belongs to Vygotsky. These different views of Vygotsky's theories are in line with what van der Veer (2008a:20) claims that Vygotsky's work has led to different interpretations because, in his opinion, the reading of historic works depends heavily on the present-day and personal knowledge. Moreover, as van der Veer asserts Vygotsky only gave general guidelines without spelling out the link between these guidelines, therefore scholars interpret those guidelines according to their own beliefs and scientific background, (2008b:15).

As will be discussed later, some view these two perspectives: cognitive and sociocultural as parallel; others view them as being different but reconcilable.

Ellis (2010:27) thinks that SLA is distinguished by theoretical pluralism and he describes the differences between the cognitive SLA and social SLA in terms of language, representation, the social context, learner identity, the learner's linguistic background, interaction, language learning, and more importantly the methodology used in researching the L2 acquisition. The following table illustrates these differences:

Dimension	Cognitive SLA	Social SLA
Language	Language viewed as either a set of formalist rules (as in Chomskyan linguistics) or as a network of form-function mappings (as in functional models of grammar of the Hallidayan	Language viewed not just as a linguistic system but as a 'diverse set of cultural practices, often best understood in the context of wider relations of power' (Norton and Toohey 2002:115).

	type).	
Mental representation	Two views: (1) as a set of rules that comprise the learner's linguistic competence; (2) as an elaborate network of connections between neural modes	In some social theories representation is not considered at all. Vygotskian approaches emphasized the semantic ('conceptual') rather than the formal properties of the language that learners internalize
Social context	A broad distribution is made between 'second' and 'foreign' language contexts. Social context is seen as influencing the rate of acquisition and ultimate level of proficiency achieved but not affecting the internal processes responsible for acquisition.	The social context is seen as both determining L2 use and developmental outcomes (as in variationist studies.) and as something that is jointly constructed by the participants. The social context is where learning takes place
Learner identity	The learner is viewed as a 'non-native speaker'. Learner identity is static.	The learner is viewed as having multiple identities that afford opportunities for language learning. Learner identity is dynamic (see Norton 2000).
Learner's linguistic background	The learner has full linguistic competence in his/her L1	Learners may be multilingual and may display varying degrees of proficiency in their various languages.
Input	Input is viewed as linguistic 'data' that serves as a trigger for acquisition. Input is	Input is viewed as contextually constructed; it is both linguistic and non-linguistic

	viewed as related to but distinguishable from 'interaction'.	
Interaction	Interaction is viewed as a source of input	Interaction is viewed as a socially negotiated event and a means by which learners are socialized into the L2 culture. Input and interaction are viewed as a 'sociocognitive whole' (Atkinson 2002).
Language learning	L2 acquisition occurs inside the mind of the learner as a result of input that activates universal cognitive processes	L2 acquisition is 'learning-in-action'; it is not a mental phenomenon but a social and collaborative one. It is an 'interactional phenomenon that transcends context while being context dependent' (Firth and Wagner 2007:807).
Research methodology	Typically, atomistic, quantitative and confirmatory-aims to form generalizations about groups of learners.	Holistic, qualitative and interpretative-focuses on individual learners and specific interactional sequences.

(Source: Ellis (2010:28-29))

In Ellis's opinion (2010), despite the fact that these two views seem to be incommensurate, it is rationale to seek a way of resolving this problem. He suggested several ways to do so as follows:

1. To take into account a rationalist view by setting a set of criteria to assess the claims grounded on the other paradigms.

2. Not to take a side or to not to take a judgmental relativist position and to take for granted that the two paradigms may have different but simultaneously valid views on the issue of L2 acquisition.
3. To recognize that theories are to offer certain purposes and therefore should be assessed in relation to the extent to which they fulfill those goals.
4. To develop a theory that incorporates both of the two paradigms.

Although the above mentioned perspectives- psychological and sociocultural- are apparently contrasting and conflicting perspectives, there are attempts to break down the lines between the two by pointing out to their important theoretical contributions and illustrating how each perspective can complement and learn from the other. Oxford and Schramm (2007:47) claim that these two perspectives have often contrasted each other in the second language domain. In their opinion the difference between the two perspectives lies in the focus, individual versus group. Kozulin et al (2003:1) assert that Vygotsky's theory emphasizes the understanding of human cognition and learning as social and cultural phenomena rather than individual. However, Oxford and Schramm (2007:47), correctly view the relation differently.

They claim that these two perspectives complement each other and that each perspective can learn from the other. In this way, they encourage positive relation and interaction between the proponents of each camp. On the other hand, Zuengler and Miller (2006) view sociocultural perspective as a rival to psychological or cognitive perspective. A perusal of sociocultural perspective literature reveals that Vygotskian theory, like the psychological perspective, is also concerned with the understanding of the development of cognitive processes. Unlike the cognitive perspective, Vygotskian theory views the social dimension of consciousness as primary in time and fact, while it views the individual dimension of consciousness as derivative and secondary. According to Oxford and Schramm (2007:47), the difference between psychological and sociocultural perspectives lies in their foci. The former focuses on the individual while the focus of the latter is on the group. Yet both perspectives are indispensable in understanding how languages are learnt. Therefore, it is not advisable to consider only one of the two foci; both should be considered and explored since each one can contribute to the other. Otherwise, there would be "an imbalance between cognitive and mentalistic orientations

and social and contextual orientation to language ...” as claimed by Firth and Wagner (1997:285). They argue that this reconceptualization of SLA research would broaden the ontological and empirical parameter of its domain while claiming that this imbalance would hinder the progression in the field of SLA. Lantolf (2007:31) too is of the opinion that sociocultural and psychological perspectives are complementary. He argues that social processes play an important role in cognitive and linguistics development. He claims that SCT is specifically designed to account for the interaction between the cognitive and social processes. The researcher argues that the focus on the dialectical link between the two domains will benefit SLA rather than viewing them as two parallel worlds.

As mentioned above, Zuengler and Miller (2006) view the two perspectives as two parallel worlds. They claim that cognitive perspective dominated the field of second language acquisition (SLA) alone for a long time and was then followed by the sociocultural perspective which, in their opinion, has unique disciplinary roots and contributions to SLA., Lantolf (2000:79) on the other hand thinks that rather than distinguishing between the mental and the social, sociocultural theory insists on a seamless and dialectic link between the two domains. He suggests that the mental activity determines the nature of the social world. At the same time, the same world of human relationships and artifacts determine, to a large extent, how people regulate their mental process. Therefore, for Lantolf, the two domains are complementary rather than being rivals. The researcher argues that the complementary view of the two perspectives will give impetus to the second language research and may shed light on the language learning and acquisition, be it the first or the second language. Besides, both perspectives have their own influence on the language learning.

In what follows, the discussion turns to the conceptual components of sociocultural theory and its contributions to the understanding of language learning.

### ***3.1 Genetic Method***

Wertsch and Tulviste (1996:58) claim that genetic method has made Vygotsky’s work attractive to contemporary Western psychology. According to them, Vygotsky’s most adequate way of understanding the function of the human mind is to follow its developmental changes. This approach to the study of the mind and consciousness from a

genetic or developmental point of view is considered pivotal to sociocultural theory. Vygotsky viewed human mental as functioning as an integrated system within various genetic domains. Vygotsky (1978), cited in Wertsch (1985), argued that to understand the real meaning of higher psychological functions, they need to be studied in their formation, as processes that change over time and not as stable properties of the mind. This implies phylogenetic, ontogenetic and microgenetic observation. In other words, phylogenesis investigates the development of a group of organisms, i.e. primates. Ontogenesis investigates the development of an individual from childhood to adulthood (biological, cultural, and historical), while microgenesis explores the development of a specific process during ontogenesis. This process usually involves observing changes that occur in front of one's eyes as pointed out by Wertsch (1985:27). Therefore, microgenesis observation can take place inside the classroom to give insights to teachers about the developments of their students.

As it is common with all the terms concerning Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition, there is no consensus among scholars about the domain of the historical or the genetic method. For example, Donato and McCormick (1994:454) think that, unlike present learning strategies research, which divides LLS into categories, genetic approach documents LLS development in situ, and goes beyond static categories. They view, LLS as a group interaction rather than an independent, solitary activity of an individual learner. On the other hand, Lantolf and Thorne (2006:25) argue that the genetic method is not intended as a substitute to other research methodologies, but as an essential outcome of Vygotsky's new method of viewing humans and human psychological roles as aided by the artifacts of social practices and culture. In fact, Donato and McCormick do not justify why the genetic method is an alternative research method. The genetic method, as proposed by Vygotsky, investigates the development of higher forms of mental behaviour (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006:25). The method is considered as a consequence of Vygotsky's new way of viewing human psychological functions that are mediated by social practices and cultural artifacts. The method can also be conceived as Vygotsky's way of thinking to overcome the mind-body dialectic which had, in his opinion, had an impact on psychology and other social sciences for a long

time. Genetic method is Vygotsky's major contribution to the theory of psychology (Lantolf and Thorne: 2006).

Donato and McCormick (1994) claim that genetic method maintains that psychological phenomena such as LLS can be understood by examining their origin in a culture-specific situated activity, such as the foreign language classroom. Although these authors assert that language learning strategies cannot be directly taught, the researcher argues that these strategies can be taught explicitly in the classroom environment and can be practiced inside and outside the classroom. He will explain later how the LLS can be taught within psychological and sociocultural perspectives.

### **3.1.1. Mediation**

Mediation, as asserted by Wertsch (2007), is a topic that is repeatedly mentioned throughout the writings and thinkings of Vygotsky. Lantolf (1994:418) also claims that Vygotsky's primary theoretical insight is the fact that the higher forms of human mental activity are *mediated* by symbolic means always and everywhere (italics in origin). As Mitchell and Myles (1998:145) point out, from Vygotsky's point of view, language is the most important symbolic tool available for mental activity mediation. Lantolf and Thorne (2006:59) also think that mediation is the vital concept of sociocultural theory. This idea points to the importance the mediation has played (and is playing) in the sociocultural theory. According to Lantolf and Thorne (2006:59), human beings live in two worlds: one is composed of signs and symbols, managed mainly through language; the other is comprised of concrete objects, controlled mostly through our hands and brains. Through these two means human are able to control and improve their environment.

The dialectical relationship between these two worlds is complicated and debatable. The controversial correlation between these two worlds is beyond the scope of this study. Vygotsky, as pointed out by Lantolf and Thorne (2006:59), argue "that higher forms of human mental activity are mediated by culturally constructed auxiliary means." This explains the fact that human development is the result of a broader system rather than just the system of a person's individual functions. According to Wertsch (2007:178) the emergence and the definition of human higher mental activity must be understood within the concept of mediation. In their daily lives, humans usually mediate to overcome any difficulty or to correct biological impairments. For example, impaired vision can be



mediated by wearing glasses. Teachers may use audiovisual aids to mediate learning. Language learning strategies can be used as mediation for learning English appropriately. Therefore, since children can be mediated by others into using concrete tools, they can also be mediated by ‘good language learners’ or by their teachers or any other capable peers into using LLS.

### ***3.1.2. Activity Theory***

Although the activity theory is a concept drawn from the basic ideas of SCT, it is developed not by Vygotsky but by one of his successors, Leontiev (Mitchell and Myles, 1998:148), (Donato and McCormick, 1994:454). The activity theory helps scholars understand the nature of the relationship between individuals and L2, and it is germane to learning strategies literature, (Lantolf (2001:143), Donato and McCormick, (1994:455). Through the activity theory teachers may understand their students learning strategies comprehensively and be able to analyze them. As suggested by Donato and McCormick, (1994:455), to analyze students’ learning strategies teachers need to take into their consideration three levels of activities. These are: object-oriented learning activities, goal directed actions and their operational components under certain conditions.

Giest and Lompscher (2003:270) claim that one of the major tasks of the teacher is to create conditions to make learning activity comprehensible for the learners, which may be formed according to the learning objectives such as science. They also think that the teacher needs to organize the learners’ learning activity as interaction and cooperation, and to give the necessary learning means or lead the procedure of finding and developing these means further. This way they suggest shifting the teacher’s role from someone who imparts knowledge, standing in front of the class, to someone who guides learners, helping them experience learning as a meaningful, necessary activity which may lead them to becoming increasingly competent and autonomous learners. This entirely contrasts the Behaviourism Approach where students were considered passive, waiting to be filled with information by their teachers. On the contrary, as suggested by Giest and Lompscher (2003:270), teaching has to be structured in a way that helps learners to become responsible for their own activity.

According to the activity theory, human mental activity analysis must take place in its natural environment, which includes culturally established objects or artifacts,

whether abstract or ideas besides the existence of other people's worlds, that is the sociocultural world. Therefore, the researcher may argue that the best way to analyze students' learning activities is to carry out the analysis in classrooms during their interactions with each other.

It is worth mentioning that the activity theory does not differentiate between thinking and activity. In this perspective, thinking is motivated by some need and directed at some object intended to meet that particular need. Thus they are conceived as indivisible and inseparable. The activity theory concentrates on how the person is acting, where is s/he acting and why s/he is acting. It considers the human as a whole, i.e. from a more holistic, concrete and less idealistic perspectives. On the other hand, traditional approaches that study the mind and mental behaviour only focus on the study of the individual and what the individual is doing (Lantolf, 2001).

### ***3.1.3. Implementations of the Activity Theory in L2.***

Since the shift of emphasis from the Behaviourism approach to the cognitive approach, the language learner is believed to be seen as an active participant who is able to construct the terms and conditions of their own learning in the classroom activities rather than passively waiting for the teacher to impart knowledge to them. In this respect, Lantolf (2001:145) claims that learners need to be understood as people and their human agency should be appreciated. According to Giest and Lompscher (2003:270) Learners have to be aware of the purposes, course, and consequences of the activity and should be actively occupied with the learning resources, analyzing them, solving problems in this situation, drawing their own conclusions, obliged to, but to be done willingly. Therefore, the researcher argues that this entails a radical change in the methods of teaching and students need to be given a big role in order to participate in the classroom. Hence, introducing language learning strategies within the cognitive and sociocultural framework may help achieve this goal.

### ***3.1.4. Zone of Proximal Zone (ZPD)***

The researcher claims that the zone of proximal development, if used appropriately and implemented properly within its theoretical bases, may help in language learning strategies instruction. The teacher can encourage students – students' interactions, and by intervening at an appropriate time, may help learners employ the

most suitable learning strategies to carry out learning activity properly and helping each other. According to Chaiklin (2003:41), the ZPD is interpreted as an interaction in doing a task between a more capable one and a less capable one. This way the less competent learner may be independently proficient at what was supposed to be jointly carried out. In other words, a learner may not be able to use a strategy by himself/herself, but with some assistance from a more able student or a teacher, s/he may be able to employ the strategy properly. This section will shed light on the ZPD investigating its theoretical background and showing how it can be implemented in the classroom.

The ZPD is one of Vygotsky's central developmental constructs, as suggested by Dunn and Lantolf ((1998:412). The idea of the ZPD, as asserted by Rezaee and Azzizi (2012:51), obviously reflects Vygotsky's view on the nature of development and the relation between learning and development. According to Vygotsky's view, learning is distinct from development, and it may lead to development. Therefore, the ZPD can explicate the potential impact of learning on development. Moreover, the ZPD is considered as a device that secures the genesis of cognitive development within social interaction, when those who are involved are provided with help from more capable others, i.e. teachers or classmates, as they engage in learning activity (Kingtoner, 2002:240).

There is no consensus among scholars that the ZPD was a central element of Vygotsky. For example, according to Gillen (2000), cited in Guk and Kellogg (2007:282), "the ZPD did not even originate with him (Vygotsky) but instead was part of a general enthusiasm for finding the social roots of phenomena that accompanied the Bolshevik Revolution." However, as suggested by Guk and Kellogg (2007:282) since the death of Vygotsky no one has been successful in operationalizing that the ZPD is in itself a proof of originality.

Despite the fact that the ZPD has become the most commonly appealing aspect of Vygotsky's SCT, it is claimed to be one of the least understood constructs in the present educational literature (Chaiklin, 2003:41). Kingtoner (2002:240) argues that although the ZPD construct has been interpreted in a different way, there is a consensus among many writers that it must not be taken out of context and should be interpreted within a broader sociogenetic cognitive theory. Some scholars even view ZPD and Krashen's  $i + 1$  as one

construct, although they belong to two parallel theories, as argued by Dunn and Lantolf (1998). This point will be explained further later in section 3.1.5.

Chaiklin (2003:39) claims that “Vygotsky’s ZPD mainly was interested in the relation between teaching and development, besides that it was related to other problems such as political issues. Vygotsky’s conceptualized the zone proximal development more specifically and elaborated than its widespread response and interpretation. This may be due to the fact that Vygotsky’s ZPD concept was uncompleted and was not clear-cut and that it was introduced at different times with different explanations by Vygotsky himself (Lantolf and Thorne:2006). Therefore, in order to use the ZPD appropriately one needs to understand the theoretical base which underpins this construct. This section comments on the common concepts of the ZPD and then aims at giving the precise and elaborated conceptualization of the construct as clarified by Chaiklin (2003), who rightly criticizes the common concepts of the ZPD because it simplifies the notion of the construct and portrays it as something which may increase students’ learning in an interesting way with little effort from the teacher’s side. In other words, as claimed by van der Veer (2008a:16), Vygotsky’s concept of the ZPD can be taken for granted as simply transposing the broad genetic law of mental development into the realm of prognosis. Chaiklin (2003:42-43) divides the common conception of the ZPD, or what he calls *the perfect vision*, into three types and criticizes each one, and then discusses the construct as it was conceived of by Vygotsky. The first aspect is the ‘generality assumption’, which claims that the construct ZPD may be able to cover all kinds of learning. According to this view, learning and development are identical. He rightly argues that there is a unity but not an identity between them.

The second aspect is termed ‘assistance assumption’, which claims that the ZPD is often needed to emphasize the availability of more competent assistance. However, Chaiklin (2003) asserts that what matters is not the competence itself, but to understand the relation between the assistance and the child’s learning and development.

The third concept is ‘potential assumption’. As suggested by the same author, to interpret the ZPD well one needs to conceptualize the problems which Vygotsky was trying to deal with when the ZPD was introduced. To do this properly, it is important to

present an understanding which may be fully integrated with Vygotsky's other theoretical and claims which are related to the ZPD.

Chaiklin (2003:45) concludes that the ZPD was not a major concept in Vygotsky's child development theory. It was, he claimed, advanced as a segment of a general analysis of the development of the child. To understand the concept of the construct properly, one needs to interpret the theoretical perspective on which it is based. According to Chaiklin, Vygotsky used the ZPD for two different purposes in order to analyze the psychological development. The first purpose involved identifying the types of maturing psychological functions and the social interactions associated with them which enable the transition of a child from one age period to the next. The second purpose involved identifying the child's present state to develop the functions considered to be as a prerequisite to that transition.

### ***3.1.5. The ZPD and Krashen's I + 1***

It was mentioned earlier that some scholars view the ZPD and Krashen's  $i + 1$  as two similar constructs which can be integrated in a way that would be useful for second language acquisition. This section aims at shedding light on them and presents different views that think they are two parallel constructs and incommensurable, as asserted by Dunn and Lantolf (1998).

According to Krashen and Terrell (1983:32), people acquire (not learn) language when they understand the language input that is little beyond their present level of competence. Krashen's hypothesis emphasizes the receptive skills, i.e. reading and listening, while underestimates the productive skills, i.e. writing and speaking, claiming that the latter will come naturally at a later stage. According to this hypothesis, learners move from the current stage  $i$  to the next stage  $i + 1$ . What is most important thing here is that, this hypothesis considers the movement from  $i$  to  $i + 1$  as a natural order. In Krashen and Terrell's (1983:33) opinions, teachers should not be concerned because, as they claimed, "if there is enough input,  $i + 1$  will be covered automatically." This hypothesis is criticized by many scholars, for example, McLaughlin (1987) asserts that the first and second language learners acquire structures without understanding them and without even expecting them to be acquired later. Having said that about Krashen's  $i + 1$  hypothesis, the questions to be raised is whether this construct is similar or dissimilar

from Vygotsky's ZPD. According to Dunn and Lantolf (1998:411) the two concepts are different and not related- besides, both of them are rooted in "incommensurable theoretical discourses". As noticed by Dunn and Lantolf (1998:419) Vygotsky's major concern, in terms of ZPD, was the assumption that development follows instruction and learning, rejecting Platonic theories of development.

As stated by Newman and Holzman (1993:57) Vygotsky saw the educational theory and practice divided into three perspectives in terms of relationship between development and instruction. The first view is that of the separatist which perceives of the development and instruction as independent processes. Vygotsky rejected this view noting that as cited in Newman and Holzman (1993), the reality that no one of the investigators has been successful in this task could be referred to the drawbacks in research method. This effort is aimed at compensating for these limitations of method throughout the abstraction power.

At this juncture, as asserted by Dunn and Lantolf (1998:419), Krashen's  $i + 1$  departs ZPD, because as they claim, Krashen's position is essentially a separatist one in spite of the fact that he differs from Piaget who was supposed to push the separatist perspective to its logical limit as Vygotsky thinks.

The second perspective of development and teaching is the identity perspective, as stated by Newman and Holzman (1993). In other words, this perspective conceives of development and instruction as the same entities. Vygotsky rejected the both of these views because, in his opinion they ignore the real relationship between development and instruction.

The third perspective tries to synthesize the above two perspectives, however, it has been rejected by Vygotsky as he accuses it of being methodologically flawed like the aforementioned views.

Having discussed the three perspectives and Vygotsky's position, the question is raised: what is Vygotsky's view regarding development and instruction? According to Newman and Holzman (1993:60) Vygotsky viewed learning and development "as neither a single process nor as independent processes." For Vygotsky, there is a complex interrelationship between learning and development. Vygotsky's concern was how instruction elicits development; for him, the answer lies in the ZPD. Instruction becomes

fruitful when it goes ahead of development. In so doing, it urges a whole series of functions which on the verge of maturing in the zone of proximal development. According to this view, instruction would be of no use if it were not a source of development. Therefore, learning and development come together at the ZPD, as noticed by Dunn and Lantolf (1998). The ZPD is a dialectic unity as far as learning and development are concerned. The authors think that in this unity, all human mental capacities that include thinking, planning, intentional memory, voluntary attention, creativity, and control of semiotic system, such as the learning of a language, interact between children and adults in the cultural community at the time of ontogenesis. This is the suitable time when children socialize and adults are able to inculcate in the children the community consciousness.

In what follows, the differences between Krashen's  $i + 1$  and the ZPD will be delineated. For Vygotsky, the ZPD allows depicting the child's immediate future and his dynamic development, whether it is achieved developmentally or it is in the process of maturing. On the other hand, Krashen's  $i + 1$  refers to the immediate future of a learner assuming that a given structure has either been acquired by help of the language acquisition device (LAD) or has not. The differences between the two constructs is that, for Krashen's  $i + 1$ , what matters is what will be acquired next rather than what is in the course of maturing. Therefore, the chasm between the two constructs is so obvious that they are incommensurable.

Another difference lies in the way Vygotsky and Krashen conceive of language, language learners and the learning process itself. For Krashen, the learner is essentially an individual who possesses a LAD which is supposed to do all the acquiring for the individual, provided that it receives comprehensible input at  $i + 1$ . This view has its roots in the Stoic philosophy as claimed by Dunn and Lantolf (1998). On the other hand Vygotsky thought differently of language and the learning process differently because he was influenced by the Marxist ideology. The key to his theory and research methodology is therefore, historical analysis, as claimed by Dunn and Lantolf (1998).

Moreover, Thorne (2000:226) summarizes the differences between the two constructs by asserting that there is a sharp contrast between them. In other words Krashen's  $i + 1$  is concerned with what an individual can achieve when there is a

comprehensible input at  $i + 1$ , i.e. the learner moves from the current level  $i$  to the level  $i + 1$  in a natural order of development. On the other hand, Vygotsky's ZPD involves what an individual can achieve in collaboration with a capable other's assistance. Therefore, Thorne (2000) asserts that the two constructs are conceptually unrelated and are both being based on different philosophical underpinnings and their foci not being the same. Therefore, there is no way to equate these two different constructs. Dunn and Lantolf's (1998) attempt to present the gap between Krashen's  $i + 1$  and the Vygotsky's ZPD reflects the paradigm war between the two camps, as noticed by Ellis (2010:30). Therefore, as suggested by Ellis (2010), a resolution should be sought to bridge the gap between these two camps. This entails raising the common ground between the views rather than emphasizing the differences. The current author claims that this study, by attempting to introduce learning strategies within these two views may be considered as a step forward on the path to reconciliation.

### ***3.2. The Rationale for Language Learning Strategy Instruction***

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) explained how the ACT model has been applied to the field of language learning strategies. They view these strategies as being like any other complex cognitive skills. Therefore, they may be learned in the same way. What is essential in this view is that learning strategies can be taught like other skills and can then be proceduralized and automatized. As it was mentioned earlier, the concept of strategy is not crystal clear - there is, therefore, no consensus on the issue among researchers. Some authors, Cohen (1998:70) for example, claims that training students to use learning strategies aims at empowering them to take control over the language learning process. Oxford (1990:201) advocates training students how to learn. She goes further and suggests that teachers themselves need to learn how to facilitate the process of strategy training. Macaro (2001:239) has made some headway and advocates learner training by proposing a system of training based on a series of steps.

On the other hand, Rees-Miller (1993:679) views teaching learners how to learn and how to use learning strategies efficiently from a different angle. She argues that there are many factors such as cultural differences, age, educational background of students, students and teachers' beliefs and other various cognitive styles that may impede implementing learner training. She points out a very important drawback. According to



her, training students to use appropriate learning strategies needs to be based on a theoretical model supported by empirical evidence.

Those who advocate training learners on how to use learning strategies appropriately have suggested different models for language learning strategies. These models, as noticed by Chamot (2004:21), are based on solid ground, intending to raise students' awareness about their own thinking and strategic process and urging them to utilize strategies that will enhance their language learning and proficiency. In spite of this, many teachers seem to have no ideas about learning strategies or do not believe in them. Some traditional teachers, influenced by the Behaviourist Approach, may think that their role is to stand in front of the class and to impart information to students. As it is essential to change learners' behaviour towards the use of learning strategies, it is inevitable that teachers' attitudes towards the process of learning should change. It is high time for students to participate actively and positively and to encourage autonomy. To change these teachers' attitudes towards learner training, it should be based on a solid theoretical background and become part of teacher training courses. The aim of strategy instruction is to provide learners with tools to attack complex problem solving efficiently until they are able to automatically use them, as pointed out by Palincsar and Schutz (2011)

The researcher advocates implementing strategy training in classrooms for many reasons. Firstly, there is a good deal of research on learning strategies revealing characteristics of good language learners. These characteristics have been identified and classified by different authors, e.g. Rubin, (1975), Naiman et al (1975), Oxford, (1990) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990). Rubin's (1981) classification divides strategies into strategies that directly affect learning and others that indirectly contribute to learning. Naiman et al (1978) have their own classifications. Oxford (1990a) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) attempted to classify strategies differently. They have attempted to show how some good learners employ strategies efficiently and then to identify and classify these strategies using different terms.

A closer look at their work reveals that all of these authors address teachers, not learners. In fact, learners are not addressed by their work and they are not concerned either. Learners may not benefit from this work since they are not the targeted audience.

In other words, all these identifications and classifications are for the teachers to know when and how ‘good language learners’ employ learning strategies. Therefore, it is natural for teachers to test them out on less able learners to see the extent to which they are useful for them. Moreover, teachers should encourage learners’ autonomy and continuation of learning outside the classrooms. This inevitably entails that students employ methods that enhance their learning. For this reason, learners need to be well equipped with the appropriate means to pave their way independently. Consequently, strategies should be taken into classrooms and implemented. It is essential as suggested by Ehrman (2011) to know when to use which strategy type rather than having a lot of them at hand. She also suggests that the best way to provide strategy training is on a ‘just in time basis.’ By doing this, it would be guaranteed to help students with strategies of whatever type when the need for them arises.

However, as asserted by Manchon, (2008:221) attempts at making strategy instruction an essential part of language teaching remain a secondary issue rather than being a priority of pedagogical recommendations and practices.

It is worth mentioning that language learning strategies should not only be based on cognitive view but it should be expanded to include sociocultural view as well. The act of learning is no longer perceived as only gaining knowledge because it is done with an object or facts, abstracted from its context, or on the other hand, as the learner is involved in processing information to learn. Learning as claimed by Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) should include the two views: cognitive and socioculturals.

### ***3.3 Language Learning Strategies Instruction***

After more than 40 years of research (since the 1970s) it is justified to call for learning strategies instruction and to look for a theoretical model to be followed. Scrutinizing the plethora of research on learning strategies discloses that the strategies used by ‘good language learners’ have a one-to-one relation to better learning.

Strategy training or strategy instruction refers to teaching learners to consciously be aware of the strategies they employ consciously to enhance their learning. Teachers may notice that less able learners either use inadequate or inappropriate language learning strategies or employ appropriate and adequate language learning strategies inefficiently.

To begin with, the attention is focused on the strengths and weaknesses of learning strategy instruction. Some of these weak points pertain to teachers. Teachers, to implement strategy instruction in classrooms, should be satisfied with the necessity of learning strategies and their role in enhancing students' learning; otherwise, they will reject the idea of training students on how to use these strategies. Teachers, before engaging in training learners on how to utilize the strategies needed, should be aware of their learners' personal styles, motivation, and cultural and educational backgrounds. Moreover, they should have a good idea of the learning strategies frequently used by their learners, especially by the successful ones. On the other hand, if the teachers are satisfied and the instruction is implemented adequately, it may bridge the gap between the less able learners and the more able ones by equipping the former with the appropriate tools required. Students may be aware of the strategies they employ and may utilize them through the help of their instructors or through help from their more experienced peers. Teachers can encourage group work and in each group learners can swap strategies.

In fact, there is no consensus among researchers and scholars who are concerned about the issue of teaching language learning strategies in classrooms. For example, some authors place a great deal of emphasis on the weaknesses of teaching learning strategies in foreign language classrooms. Rees-Miller (1993:679) thinks that attempts to apply learning strategies theory in learner training yield only limited success. She attributes this qualified success to different factors such as cultural differences, age, students' educational background, students' and teachers' beliefs about language learning and other different cognitive styles. One may notice that she bases her critiques on a supposition that the characteristics of the good language learners per se can be taught to students. She assumes that the proponents of learning strategies instruction believe that by teaching poor language learners the strategies of successful learners they will be able to automatically increase their learning efficiency.

A closer look at some of the advocates of strategy training may reveal Rees-Miller to have made the wrong assumption.. Rubin (1987:18) argues that the centre of strategic training, whether cognitive or metacognitive, may depend on the learning preferences of a particular learner. This means that teachers should not impose on learners what they think to be effective strategies as reported by the good language

learners. Oxford and Leaver (1996:228) also assert that strategy instruction includes active participation of the learner, not merely helping learners to use typical strategies as assigned to them by their teachers. Cohen (1998:70) also claims that the aim of strategy training is to raise learner autonomy and learner self-direction by allowing learners to select their own strategies. Larsen-Freeman (1991:332) thinks that although the effect of strategy training is difficult to determine, it seems that the performance of students who receive strategy training is much better than students with no training. For her, the degree to which the training has been effective is influenced by the task, the difficulty of the task, and the level of support for strategy transfer. In other words, the intervention of teachers and a more able peer may be indispensable.

The researcher advocates the importance of taking language learning strategies into classrooms as teaching learners these techniques and encouraging them to be aware of these tricks may help them enhance their learning. However, this does not mean that, by teaching less successful language learners to use the strategies which distinguish more successful learners, will make the formers automatically become successful language learners. As research reveals, there are many factors, such as gender, motivation and style - to mention but a few- that play an important role in the efficient use of strategies. For instance, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) claim that motivation is considered to be an essential factor that has an influence on the use of learning strategies. Schmeck, (1988:175) points out that, learning style reveals the learning strategies that students prefer.

There are certain issues to be taken into consideration before teaching learners these strategies, as noticed by Chamot (2001:43). For example, teachers who are supposed to integrate learning strategies into their teaching should be prepared and trained to be able to carry out the job successfully. Another important aspect which should be identified is the relationship between effective learning strategies instruction and the characteristics of the potential teachers. In other words, their teaching approaches and methods, attitudes, beliefs and experience should be known. In order for strategy instructions to be implemented in foreign language classrooms a model based on a theoretical framework is required. To call for a strategy instruction without underpinning it by a theory is a fruitless effort and will yield qualified results. Above all, learning

strategies should be taught in a social context, that is to say the classroom should be considered as a social community in which students interact socially.

### ***3.4 Implementation of Learning Strategies Instruction***

Since learning strategies instruction is in its early stages, it is justifiable to start this section with questions. Should learning strategies be taught separately or should they be incorporated into the content? Should the language teachers be responsible for teaching these strategies to their classes or should they be taught by a separate teacher? Should learning strategies be taught as an elective subject for all students regardless of their specialty? This section tries to explore these issues. Reviewing the literature on learning strategies instruction reveals that there are two different camps. For example, Derry and Murphy (1986); Jones et al. (1987) cited in O'Malley and Chamot (1990), advocate separate training programmes. They think that learners will concentrate better on strategies if they are taught separately rather than being taught in conjunction with the subject matter.

On the other hand, others advocate integration of strategy training programmes with the subject matter because it is more effective than learning separate skills, and that practicing these strategies on authentic tasks facilitates transferal to similar tasks in other classes, (Wenden: 1987). O'Malley and Chamot (1990:153) raised another important issue as to whether these strategies should be direct instruction or embedded instruction, regardless of whether they are separate or integrated. In direct instruction, students are taught strategies explicitly and students are aware of what they are doing. In embedded instruction, students are taught strategies without informing them of the reasons why they are using this approach. As pointed out by Wenden (1987), embedded strategy instruction will not lead students to becoming autonomous learners, which is the ultimate aim of teaching learning strategies.

The researcher is inclined towards Wenden's claim because by teaching learning strategies explicitly, teachers help learners to be aware of these strategies. Moreover, by involving these learners in evaluating and assessing the use of these strategies, students may be motivated to use them. On the other hand when these strategies are taught implicitly, learners may not notice their value and may overlook their role in enhancing the way they learn.

Regarding learning strategies instructional implementation, O'Malley and Chamot, (1990:154) raise a number of issues which will be analyzed subsequently. In their opinion, the most important one is to develop in teachers the understanding and techniques for delivering effective learning strategy instruction to students. Another issue is the development and adaptation of instructional materials which provide strategy training either as a supplement to the course textbooks for inclusion in the textbooks or as part of the core lessons. They also see that the specific scope, sequence and methods of training activities that students need should be met. Then they stress that the level of proficiency at which the strategy training should commence has to be determined. No doubt the above raised issues are essential, but are they practical and current?

Although the above mentioned issues are essential as far as learning strategies are concerned and serve as a useful way of implementing learning strategies instruction, they ignore university students who study English intensively at the General Foundation Level in foreign language contexts. They also fail to address the issue of University teachers and professors who are usually different from school teachers. The former are not trained in teaching English as a foreign/second language, while the latter are always trained and are specialized. Therefore, the researcher suggests that before implementing and commencing learning strategies instruction at universities where English is taught as a foreign language and used as a medium of instruction, workshops and seminars should be held.

These workshops and seminars can shed light on the identification, description, and classification of learning strategies for university teachers, especially those who teach at the General Foundation level, allowing them to become aware of these strategies. In my opinion, training students in a foreign language context at a university level to use appropriate learning strategies is of vital importance because these students need English as a subject matter and as a medium of instruction when they enroll in their colleges after they finish their intensive English learning programmes. O'Malley and Chamot (1990:151) consider language production skills in second language contexts as particularly important because, in their opinion, competence in speaking and writing is a fundamental factor in students' success in academic settings. The researcher thinks it is

also important to strike a balance between the production and receptive skills because university students need them all to achieve their academic goals.

In order to propose the teaching of learning strategies, it is crucial to decide whether learning strategies are a conscious or subconscious mental activity. Although this is a controversial topic and there is no consensus among researchers on the issue, the current researcher supports those who claim that learning strategies are conscious mental activities. For example, Kail & Bisanz, (1982) and Rabinowitz and Chi in Macaro, (2006:327) claim that learning strategies are classified as mental activity. Macaro (2006:327) asserts that, "... whereas a mental activity might be subconscious, an action undertaken with a goal and evaluated against a learning situation can only be conscious." He also supports the idea that strategies contain goals and a learning situation in addition to an action.

Having said that learning strategies are conscious and a mental activity, one can justifiably propose that they can be taught. The first step in implementing learning strategy instruction, as suggested by Oxford, (1990:193)) is to identify and diagnose students' strategies in order for the training strategies devised to be effective. This step is essential for the teachers to be aware of their students' strategies so that these teachers can conduct their training efficiently. Oxford does not mention whether strategy instruction is to be implemented separately or incorporated into the skill being taught. Recently, as pointed out by Rubin et al (2006:141) there has been the ultimate aim of strategy instruction is to develop learner self-management as shown by research. . It is worth mentioning that learning strategies instruction is not considered a comprehensive method of language teaching as asserted by Larsen-Freeman (2000:159).

To implement language learning instruction, which is sometimes referred to by some authors as strategy based instruction (SBI) (Rubin et al, 2006:141), a model is needed. In this section the researcher aims to shed light on some models that explain how learning strategies should be taught. He will then suggest a model of teaching instruction to students learning English as a foreign language. The ultimate goal of strategy instruction as asserted by Cohen (1998:70), is to give power to learners by allowing them to take the language learning procedure under their control. These instructional models have some features in common. As noticed by Chamot (2004:21), there is a consensus

between them all that developing learners' metacognitive understanding of the value of learning strategies is important and they also suggest that this awareness should be facilitated through teacher demonstration and modeling. In other words, they view teachers' intervention as indispensable. Another important issue is that, these models emphasize practicing the strategies being taught to students in order to use them automatically. This view is compatible with the Communicative Language Teaching which "encourages an emphasis on practice as a way of developing communicative skills." (Richards and Rodgers, 2009:162).

Before discussing the models of strategy instruction, it is important to highlight the factors which impact the efficiency of learning strategy instruction, as pointed out by Chamot et al (1999:35); for example, teachers' and learners' beliefs as far as learning is concerned; the social climate of the learning context; and general approaches to instruction utilized in teaching. Students' beliefs can be affected by the way they have been previously taught English and other subjects earlier. Those who have been taught by 'spoon-feeding' may find it difficult to become independent learners. Teachers' beliefs, as stated before are essential for learning strategy instruction to take place and to be an effective tool in both the teaching and the learning process. To intimate strategy instruction, teaching may be supportive to provide the appropriate amount of guidance. The amount of scaffolding needed, depends on students' needs. The fewer strategies students apply, the stronger scaffolding they will need. As pointed out by Chamot et al (1999:40), teachers can gradually withdraw their support when students become capable of employing strategies independently.

### ***3.5 Models for Language Learning Strategy Instruction***

As a starting point it is better to define a model. According to VanPatten and Williams (2007: 5), there is a good deal of confusion between theories and models. According to their definition a model describes the processes or groups of processes of a phenomenon. A model does not account for or explain why different components of a phenomenon interact but it explains how they interact. Another difference between a theory and a model is that, a theory is required to predict relying on generalizations, whereas this is not required of a model.



Referring back to the models, there is a sequence of four steps which are common to all models as asserted by Rubin et al (2006:142). These steps are:

1. Raising awareness of the strategies employed by learners.
2. Teachers demonstrating and modeling the strategies to increase the students' awareness of their own thinking and learning process.
3. Creating opportunities for students to practice using strategies to help them move towards autonomous utility of strategies in order to gradually withdraw scaffolding.
4. Helping students to self-evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies employed and then be able to transfer them to new tasks.

McDonough (2005: 156), cited in Murphy (2008:305) notes the following instructional framework to be shared by many authors:

1. Preview materials for useful strategies and preview the students' current learning strategies repertoire.
2. Present the strategy that is going to be introduced by giving its name, and explaining why and when to use it.
3. Model the strategy by demonstrating how to use it.
4. Develop students' abilities to evaluate the strategy in order to transfer it to new tasks.

In what follows, the researcher suggests a model for teaching learning strategies, bearing in mind the steps mentioned above and utilizing from the models suggested by Chamot (2005); Chamot et al (1999), Cohen (1998) and Grenfell & Harris (1999).

This model aims at helping teachers to integrate learning strategies into their language tasks to teach them explicitly. To implement teaching strategies effectively, the researcher proposes that certain steps to be followed. Before implementing these steps, teachers should be aware of the students' styles in order to be able to understand the preferred and appropriate strategies to be employed by his/her students. (The timing of each step is set for a one-hour lecture.)

Step 1: The teacher raises students' awareness of the strategies they always use to facilitate their learning. Students brainstorm and mention the strategies that they use for the skill to be taught e.g. How do you prefer to learn new words? (5-10 minutes)

Step 2: The teacher models these strategies he/she intends to teach in order to train students and show them how to use them. (10 minutes)

Step 3: Students practice the strategy/strategies taught. At this stage the teacher provides the scaffolding needed and then withdraw himself/herself when students are able to use the strategies taught. (almost 25 minutes)

Step 4: Students evaluate the strategies they have used and the benefits they gained from using them. (5 minutes)

Step 5: The teacher asks students which strategies work for them or suit their styles. This step is very important because students may vary in their preferences of strategies. (5 minutes)

Step 6: The teacher checks if students are able to transfer these strategies to other tasks. The teacher should expect some students to be able to do so while others may not. Scaffolding may be needed again for the latter group in particular. This step is also particularly important for students who are learning English as a medium for studying other subjects. (5 minutes)

Step 7: The teacher and students evaluate the strategies used and their impact on what they have studied and to what extent they have benefited from them. (5 minutes)

Step 8: The teacher assigns homework for students and reminds them to use similar strategies while completing their homework. This step is to enhance the independent use of learning strategies without the teacher's help and for students to become familiar with the use of strategies.

These steps should be carried out as an integral part of the lesson and should not be taught separately. Discussions between the teacher and the students and between students themselves are encouraged for the whole class to participate in evaluating the strategies being taught. This gives students the feeling that they are responsible for their own learning.

It is mentioned elsewhere that teachers' belief is very important in deciding whether or not to teach learning strategies. Therefore, their decision is of vital importance. Teachers, as noticed by Borg (2003:81) are active and they are decision makers who make their instructional choices based on their knowledge, thought and beliefs. This knowledge is accumulated through their experiences and throughout their

careers. They are also, as described by Sims and Sims (1995:13), the managers and facilitators of the instructional system. The methods that teachers adopt in their teaching affect, among other factors, the way they perceive learning strategies. The following chapter discusses the methods of teaching English language and the theories that underpin each method and their impact on the learning of the English language.

## Chapter Four

### Methods of English Language Teaching: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives

#### 4.0. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a historical background of the concept of methods. Grenfell's (2000:2) states that, up until the post-war period, modern languages were seldom learnt as a tool for communication, business transactions or interaction with others. Language learning was perceived as a sign of prestige and a mark of refined culture. The aims of learning modern languages in general, and English in particular, have changed and so too have the methods of teaching in order to meet the new exigencies of learning languages. It is obvious that for those who want to learn a language for prestige, the ability to analyze the language would suffice, whereas for those who aim to study the language as a means of communication, the ultimate end is to use the language. Therefore, any change in the aims entails a change of methods. These changes mainly occur as a result of two factors. Grenfell (2000:2) rightly describes them as a "twin pincer movement". One is a top-down movement carried out officially and the other is a bottom-up one, that is, from teachers who realized by themselves the shortcomings of old methods. The two factors are not the only reasons for the changes, as noticed by Grenfell himself (2000:3). Other factors that contributed to the evaluation and the development of methods include changes in the theories of language and language learning and changes in the kind of proficiency learners opt for. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001:3), changes in language teaching methods throughout history have manifested the kind of proficiency for which learners' aim at. Moreover, they have also resulted from the changes in theories of the nature of language and of language learning.

#### 4.1 What is a Method?

Although the term *method* plays a pivotal role in any language teaching career, it has not had a crystal clear meaning among those who work in the field of Applied Linguistics, as noticed by Kumaravadivelu (2006:83). The concept of method is defined differently by different writers. For example, Anthony (1963) cited by Richards and Rodgers (2001:19), defines it as a general idea for presenting the language material orderly, no part of which contrasts, and is grounded upon, the approach that is selected.

Richards and Rodgers perceive method as an umbrella that comprises three levels: approach, design and procedure (1982:153). Kumaravadivelu (2006) differentiates between ‘method’ and ‘methodology’. ‘Method’ refers to well-known methods theorized and founded by specialists in this area, whereas ‘methodology’ refers to what teachers do in the classroom to achieve the objectives of the lesson. Others use the two terms interchangeably, for example, Grenfell and Harris (1999). The current author is of the opinion that these two terms have to be used separately because he thinks that ‘method’ is more general than ‘methodology’ which is more specific and procedural. Having shed light on the term ‘method’, what follows is a review of English language teaching methods from theoretical and historical points of view.

#### ***4.2 Theoretical Perspectives***

How language is learnt and how it should be taught is a question that has occupied human thought for a long time. This is determined by the direct experience of teachers and learners (Grenfell and Harris, 1999:8). As far as foreign language (teaching and learning) is concerned, the idea of being bilingual or multilingual is thought to be the norm rather than the exception, as asserted by Richards and Rodgers (2001:3). Historically speaking, different languages, e.g. Latin and Greek, held the title of the world’s most studied languages for a variety of factors such as education, commerce, and religion. For teaching and learning to take place efficiently, there should be a scientific method based on theories of teaching and learning. According to Kumaravadivelu (2006:84), Anthony (1963) was probably the first to suggest a framework for understanding the constituents of teaching methods. He proposed a trio of terms distinction: approach, method and technique. An approach was defined as the theories that deal with the nature of the language and the nature of language teaching and learning. Therefore, an approach is an umbrella under which come the theoretical principles that rule language learning and language teaching. A method indicates how to execute the theories of language manifested by the selected approach. Thus, there is a link between approach and method, the former is obvious and deals with ‘why’ and the latter is procedural and deals with ‘how’. The last term in Anthony’s framework is ‘technique’, which is implementational, that is to say, it takes place in a classroom in order

to carry out an immediate objective. It is very important for the techniques to resonate with a method and not to contradict an approach.

Although Anthony's model was useful and was able to exemplify the relationship between the theoretical principles and how they should be implemented in the classroom, it was criticized by some authors. For example, Richards and Rodgers (2001:20) think that the framework fails in a number of ways. For instance, it does not describe the nature of the method itself. It also ignores the roles of teachers and learners and what they are supposed to do in a method. Moreover, nothing is said about the role of instructional materials or what form they should take. Kumaravadivelu (2006:85) sees that the framework lacks a distinction between approach, method and technique. He also thinks that some of the items are used according to a subjective judgment, such as considering a pattern practice as a method and imitation as a technique while both of them, in his opinion, are classroom techniques. Kumaravadivelu rightly criticizes the framework, taking another important point into consideration, that it portrays the language teaching as a simple hierarchical relationship between approach, method and technique and ignores factors such as social demands, instructional resources and constraints. In fact, language teaching cannot be looked upon as an abstract. It influences and is influenced by social, cultural, economic and even political factors. For example, a teacher may think of group work as an important technique for teaching language activities, but under certain circumstances, s/he may not be able to implement it if the class is composed of males and females in a culture that does not allow males and females to form one group. As another example, a presentation can be considered a useful technique, but female students in some societies may not agree to stand in front of male students.

To overcome the Anthony's model, Richards and Rodgers (2001) revised and refined it to provide a more comprehensive model. They also used three terms: approach, design and procedure. For them, a method is theoretically connected to an approach and determined by a design and executed by a procedure. Thus, method is used as an umbrella that links the theory (approach) and practice (procedure). That is to say they defined the method into three levels: approach, design and procedure, (Richards and Rodgers: 1982:153). They examine the linguistic and psycholinguistic aspects of approach in terms of the theory of language - which they divide into structural, functional

and interactional- and the theory of language learning. They think that the learning theories are either process-oriented or condition-oriented. Although Richards and Rodgers' model is more comprehensive and can be used to examine teaching methods and approaches to find out the extent to which they meet the levels of methods in terms of approach, method and procedure, it was criticized. For example, Kumaravadivelu (2006) sees the system on which the model is based as redundant and overlapping. He thinks that they have failed to give a crystal clear distinction between design and approach. The researcher thinks the opposite is correct. They clearly differentiate between them by stating that, approach includes both theories of language and language learning, (Richards & Rodgers, 1982:155), and they state that the syllabus is the first module of the level of what they label as design, (Richards & Rodgers, 1982:158). Therefore, what Kumaravadivelu considers a blurred boundary is the thread that runs between the approach and the design which is, in the researcher's opinion, an advantage, not a flaw. However, the researcher thinks that Richards & Rodgers framework, although comprehensive, ignores examinations and testing as objectives of a teaching method to assess students' achievement. Testing is considered to be one of the impetuses that motivates students to study and then to learn. Some students learn English to gain high marks in the exam. Some teachers, especially in the final year of Basic Education schools in the Sultanate of Oman teach in a manner which may be referred to as examination oriented. Thus, testing should find its way in either the design or the procedure.

#### ***4.3 Historical Perspective***

Many published articles and books wrote about methods of teaching from historical perspectives, including Richards & Rodgers (2001), Larsen-Freeman (2000), Grenfell & Harris (1999) and Kumaravadivelu (2006). However, the exact number of methods which are being used at present is not clear (Kumaravadivelu (2006:90). As noticed by Kumaravadivelu, language teaching methods are not categorized in a conceptually coherent fashion. In what follows, the discussion deals with the teaching methods, in a selective manner, under two labels: teacher-centred methods and learner-centred methods.

#### ***4.4 Teacher- Centred Methods***

Teacher-centred as the name suggests is a teacher dominated classroom and students may sit passively in the class without any real communication, therefore students may not benefit from the methods that apply the teacher-centred approach since the emphasis is not on negotiation and communication and using language in real context.

The first method was the Grammar-Translation Method. According to Grenfell and Harris (1999) and Richards and Rodgers (2001), The Grammar-Translation Method was the most overriding teaching methods of the contemporary period. It could be traced back to the time when Latin and Greek were taught as the world's most important languages. This method emphasized the analysis of grammar and the memorization of rules and vocabulary through classical texts. Thus, this method may encourage learners to employ rote learning strategies. The primary aim was to improve the skills of writing and reading to read the literature of the foreign language, thereby increasing the learners' intellectual development and cultural competence. Grammar was taught deductively. Translation from and into the target language was highly appreciated and was a mark of proficiency. The medium of instruction was the learners' native language. Such a method considered the role of the teachers as the source of information and s/he was in the class to impart knowledge to his/her students. Students played a very passive role in the teaching/learning processes. Therefore, it is not surprising that this method was rejected. However, some non-native teachers of English are still under the shadow of this method and always resort to translation.

Another method is the Direct Method. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001:12), the pillars on which this method stood were as follows: The language of instruction was in the target language; the vocabulary and sentences to be taught were those that were needed on a daily basis. The focus was on oral communication built up in a carefully graded progression and to be conducted between teachers and students in small intensive classes. Grammar was taught inductively. Speaking, listening and pronunciation were introduced. Teachers would still play an important role at the expense of learners.

The above two methods were based on no clear language and language learning theories.



Another important method was The Audiolingual Method. This method was one of the most influential methods of teaching in the 1960s and it was able to transform language teaching from an art into a science, as claimed by the advocates of Audiolingualism. Unlike the aforementioned methods, The Audiolingual Method was based on linguistics theory and language learning theory: Structural Linguistics and Behaviourism. This method was also considered to be teacher dominated since teachers played active and central roles, (Grenfell & Harris 1999) and (Richards & Rodgers, (2001). Therefore, teachers who adopt any one of the above-mentioned methods might not like to teach learning strategies which mainly depend on the active participations of learners in the processes of learning and teaching. However, memory strategies may be easily fit to this method as aforementioned in Chapter Two. On the other hand, teachers who adopt one of the following methods may like to teach language learning strategies because they may believe in the active roles of learners and they are not in the class simply to impart knowledge to students.

#### ***4.5 Learner-Centred Methods***

The Learner-centred Approach, as its name suggests offers learners opportunities to be active learners which may create favourable environments to them to use the language inside the classroom in a similar way of the real life situations.

It is suitable to discuss ‘The Natural Approach’ under this category. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), McLaughlin (1987) and VanPatten & Williams (2007) this approach has emerged as a result of a collaboration between a teacher, Terrell and an applied linguist, Krashen. It is based on Krashen’s theory of the Monitor Model (Krashen: 1982). For them, communication plays an essential function of language; therefore, the emphasis is on teaching communication abilities. For this reason, Krashen and Terrell (1983:17) claim that their approach is similar to other communicative approaches. In addition to this, they claim that their approach is unlike other methods, such as the Audiolingual Method, which is based on a language theory, whereas theirs is based on a language acquisition theory, i.e. The Monitor Theory. Krashen’s Monitor Theory (Krashen: 1987) is based on five hypotheses: The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis. This is one of the most important and controversial hypotheses. For him acquisition and learning are two parallel ways of gaining knowledge. Acquisition is a

natural and unconscious process of learning, whereas learning is a conscious studying of knowledge, e.g. grammatical rules and patterns. The former can take place informally while the latter, formally. Learning, as defined by Krashen (1987:10), refers to conscious knowledge of the rules in a way that makes it easy to talk about them. This definition makes it similar to 'declarative knowledge' as defined by O'Malley and Chamot (1990:20) who defined it as information which can often be talked about verbally. Although 'declarative knowledge' and 'learning' seem to be similar, they play different roles. 'Declarative knowledge' can lead to procedural knowledge. On the other hand, Krashen's theory claims that learning does not lead to acquisition. As noted by Broady and Dwyer (2008), Krashen's underestimating of the learner's conscious participation obviously contradicts the opinion that the effective language learner consciously manages their learning. Therefore, if conscious learning does not lead to acquisition, what is the use of employing learning strategies? Students employ learning strategies in order to gain competence by effectively learning the language. As pointed out by Mitchell and Myles (1998:36), Krashen has been criticized because of his failure to clearly distinguish between conscious and subconscious processes.

Another hypothesis is The Monitor Hypothesis. It seems that Krashen, as this hypothesis spells out, underestimates the role of learning by confining its function to editing acquired knowledge during utterance or language production. In so doing, Krashen downplays formal teaching activities which provide conscious knowledge, such as grammatical rules. These rules will add nothing, according to this hypothesis, to acquisition but will edit what has been acquired by the learner through communication. Thus, this hypothesis may undermine the efforts exerted by teachers to teach grammar rules since their role is only to correct learners' utterances during communication. This claim has also been criticized because as noticed by Mitchell and Myles (1998:37), it is difficult to prove whether the source of the rule being applied is acquired or learned.

The third pillar is The Natural Order Hypothesis, according to which, the acquisition of grammatical order follows predictable sequences. McLaughlin (1987:35) claims that Krashen's argument for this hypothesis is mainly based on the morpheme studies which have been criticized for ignoring individual differences. He suggests a weak form for this hypothesis in order to make it acceptable. In his opinion, the weak

form can postulate that some items can be learned before others, but not always. It is difficult to believe that all students, regardless of their mother tongue and language experience, will acquire the rules of language in a predictable order. However, it is claimed that the orders in which students acquire the rules of language are independent of instructional sequences (VanPatten & Williams (2007:27).

The other two hypotheses are The Input Hypothesis and the Effective Filter Hypothesis. The former is related to acquisition, not learning. Krashen (1987) claims that Language acquisition occurs when language that contains structure a bit beyond learners' current level of competence is understood ( $i + 1$ ). In his opinion this is done with the help of context or extra linguistic information.

The latter claims that the effect of the 'affect' is not essential in the language acquisition device because it is outside of it. According to this hypothesis, 'input' is the most important variable hindering or facilitating the delivery of information to the language acquisition device. According to Mitchell and Myles (1998:37), both of these hypotheses have been criticized for being vague and atheoretical. It seems that Krashen has failed to give evidence to prove these hypotheses. It is right to say that Krashen's Monitor Model has influenced many studies in the second language acquisition field, yet it should be taken cautiously. It still needs to be supported by solid empirical studies and evidence.

Another important learner-centred method is Communicative Language Teaching (hereafter CLT). As noticed by Larsen-Freeman (2000:121), the goal of most of the teaching methods is for students to communicate in the target language. Meeting such a goal inevitably entails the ability of communication among learners especially outside the classroom; otherwise, the method would be a failure. Grammar-based methods, one would say, may lead to memorizing many grammatical rules and patterns without being able to effectively communicate outside the classroom to meet the needs of the daily life. Communicative Language Teaching has emerged to fill this void left by the proceeding methods. CLT aims to make communicative competence the ultimate goal of language teaching and communication (Larsen-Freeman: 2000).

According to Richards and Rogers (2001), CLT marks the beginning of a major paradigm shift within the field of language teaching from the 1960s onwards. This

method, as pointed out by Richards and Rodgers (2001), is based on the theory of language as communication aiming to develop communicative competence. In CLT the role of the teacher is different. Their role is to enable students to communicate in the foreign language by establishing situations to stimulate communication. The role of the students is also different. Students participate actively in communicating and engage actively in negotiating meaningful conversation (Larsen-Freeman: 2000). Applying CLT in the classroom, in the researcher's opinion, requires a change of examination formats. Based on anecdotal evidence from his own experience, communicative competence is ignored in the Final Exams in Oman and the Sudan; therefore, the final-year teachers resort to methods that emphasize memorization and rote-learning strategies and the teaching of grammar. It is claimed that the traditional tests do not give enough weight to second language learners' skills in performing in real world communication, as noticed by Canale and Swan (1980). An important point to be raised here is that for the CLT to be implemented successfully, teachers and learners should be sustainably motivated as pointed out by Canale and Swain (1980).

The above teaching methods are given as examples of teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches.

#### ***4.6 Current Views of the Concept of Method***

As mentioned above, the aim of language teachers and researchers was (and still is) to find the most suitable method of teaching. According to Richards (1999:35), the history of language teaching in the last century has raised the consciousness that improvements in language teaching will be positively influenced by improvements in the quality of methods, and therefore, an effective language teaching method will be developed. Although essentially there are approximately about eleven teaching methods, one would be mistaken to think that they all provide eleven different ways of language teaching. In fact they have common characteristics in their theoretical as well as practical approaches to the target language learning and teaching, as asserted by Kumaravadivelu (2003:24).

Moreover, Richards (1999:36) claims that teachers rarely follow the methods that they are supposed to follow. Larsen-Freeman (2000: x) suggests that the implementation of a method in the classroom is influenced by different factors, such as the teacher, the

students, and their expectations of appropriate social roles. This means that in order for a method to succeed there are certain conditions to be fulfilled. A method cannot work in a void. As Larsen-Freeman (2000: xi) rightly points out, what matters is not the method *per se*, but how to use it. Teachers implement methods in classrooms, relying on their own experience and the needs and standards of their students' idiosyncrasies which may justify the modifications or the eclectic use of methods. Teachers are not expected to blindly follow 'prescribed' teaching methods.

A number of authors have criticized the concept of language teaching methods. For example, Kumaravadivelu (2003:28) thinks that one of the flaws of the concept of method is that theorists and teachers perceive it differently. Furthermore, he claims that since methods are based on idealized notions, they will fail to envisage language learning and teaching needs, wants and situations which are difficult to predict. According to this author, methods will not be able to provide practicing teachers with suggestions that fit certain situations to meet the challenges they face throughout their professional daily routines. Another shortcoming he points out is the fact that methods shift from one theoretical extreme to the other. Yet another important shortcoming of the concept of method, he rightly claims, is that it confines the success or failure of learning language to teaching methods, ignoring other factors such as teacher cognition, learner perception, societal needs and so on.

The above criticisms may lead to the complete abandonment of methods altogether or to a radical departure from the mainstream of the concept of methods to what may be referred to as an alternative to method rather than an alternative method. To abandon methods altogether is not a practical suggestion because teachers may not be left alone to their own experience. The other point or an alternative to method in itself will be a method however, under a different name. In what follows, the discussion turns to the roles played by teachers and learners to achieve successful learning. Successful learning entails involving learners in the teaching/learning process. Therefore, any method, whatsoever the name may be, should recognize the role of the learners. Richards (1990: 35) rightly points out that the teacher and the learners complement each other's work, that is to say the teacher paints half of the picture while the learners paint the other half. This means that teachers need certain methods and techniques to accomplish their duties

and students should rely on their learning strategies to process their learning. Therefore, teaching methods, the researcher argues, should incorporate learning strategies.

It is worth mentioning that the 'method' implies two different elements. One, conceptualized and constructed by theorists, and another, practiced by teachers, as claimed by Kumaravadivelu (2006:84). Theorists design methods which are based on views of language and language learning (Richards and Rodgers: 2009) while teachers practically apply these theories in the classroom. Teachers' work is affected by different variables such as learners' needs, attitudes, classroom environment and the teacher's experience and personality.

Research conducted by scholars such as Nunan (1987) and Thornbury (1996) shows that even teachers who state that they follow a particular method do not in fact stick to the basic principles that correlate with it. Therefore, Nunan (1987:144) claims that teachers should become the main agents of change throughout an increased sensitivity to what is actually taking place in their classes. As a matter of fact, methods give guidelines to teachers according to the way theorists view language, as noticed by Kumaravadivelu (2003). For example, if language development is viewed as intentional and that it takes place through conscious efforts, linguistic forms will be emphasized, such as the Audiolingual Method. If the concern is language use and learner needs, the methods adopted seek to provide opportunities for learners to be engaged in pre-selected, pre-sequenced grammatical structures besides communicative functions through meaning-focused activities and learning tasks. An example of this method is communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Other methods are concerned with learning processes because language development is viewed as incidental rather than intentional, e.g. the Natural Approach.

Which of the above mentioned methods are to be recommended to language teachers? As noticed by Kumaravadivelu (2003:28), even the authors of the two textbooks on methods widely used in the USA avoid recommending a specific method. For example, Richards and Rodgers (2001:ix) state that they avoid personal evaluation, they rather prefer readers to make their own evaluations. Larsen-Freeman (2000:4) claims that which techniques and principles to choose depends on learning outcomes. The choice of methods may be imposed upon teachers by educational authorities. For

example, Corbluth (1983:18), the author of *The Nile Course for the Sudan* explicitly states that the course book has shifted the emphasis towards the Communicative Approach to enable students to do things with language and to perform essential functions. Thus teachers in such situations have to follow the ‘prescribed’ methods.

In spite of all that has been said about teaching methods, there are those who believe that learners may be successful in spite of the teacher’s methods and techniques and not because of them, as Richards (1999:42) asserts. Careful scrutiny of the above mentioned methods carefully reveals that some of them were not grounded on any scientific theories, for example, the Grammar Translation Method. Others, such as the Audiolingual Method were grounded on conclusions derived from linguistic theories and from learning theories. Grammar Translation advocates assume that learners will learn the target language by merely following the teaching method. On the other hand, the advocates of the Audiolingual Method view learners as passive subjects whose intervention is not desirable. Other opposing views, such as the interlanguage theory conceive errors as signs of learning, while Rubin (1975) views learners as responsible for their success by raising awareness of their learning strategies. Communicative Language Teaching also emphasizes authentic communication rather than direct instruction, (Pavicic Takac, 2008:1).

All the above mentioned methods claim that by adopting one method or another, learners will learn the target language. However, teachers complain that their students are still a long way from acquiring the second language. Green (2000:6) rightly argues that emphasizing the prominence of learning strategies in classrooms would make the situation more alleviated.

When people learn the first language, they also learn socio-cultural behaviours and the cognitive skills to live fully as a human being. However, the explicit knowledge of the language comes later in life. Learning a second language in a formal setting does not continue on the same path, where there are some various elements which may hinder the process of learning. For example, second language learners have already learnt at least one language the usefulness of which is debatable (Grenfell, 2000:7). According to Grenfell (2000:7), modern languages learning and teaching should not overestimate the similarities between the first and the second language so as not to overlook important

differences of form and process in the way the two languages are acquired and used. Understanding language is crucial to place it in its social and psychological context.

In this respect, Grenfell (2000:7) criticizes the Chomskyan notion of universal grammar as they have given a model of learning language as an intra-psychological level, ignoring to some extent its social form and functioning. He also criticizes Communicative Language Teaching as valuing the social utility of language at the expense of the psychological shifts which are, in his opinion important to develop linguistic competence. He also criticizes modern methodologies in their assumption that, perhaps by mistake, both psychological and sociocultural theories of learning can be integrated with little incompatibility, that they may be put together under the umbrella of communication. The outcome of this compromise sometimes causes confusion, as pointed out by Grenfell (2000:7). According to Grenfell (2000), the solution to this lies in the strategic approach to learning and teaching. The researcher intends to adopt Vygotskian perspective following Grenfell (2000) together with a cognitive theory. Vygotsky views language as a mediator that facilitates human life in the world. In Vygotskian perspective, all thought does not much occur in language. Thought is constructed around and through language. Language, as pointed out by Grenfell (2000:10) is the mediator which lets people communicate with others and with themselves. It also provides the basis for thought. Problems are moved to solutions through language. In other words, language provides humans with conceptual schemes for solving problems. These facts should be considered when language is taught. In terms of the cognitive theoretical model, it views information processing in two forms: declarative and procedural knowledge as discussed in Chapter Two.

The question that raises itself is whether this case is the same with the second language learner? According to Grenfell (2000:10), learning a language in itself is a problem. The second language learner is confronted by many problems. For instance, second language learners may not be able to express themselves in the second language properly either because they have a limited repertoire of vocabulary or they may not know how to make appropriate structures. It is important for the second language learners to be aware of all these problems and the ways in which to deal with them. At this



juncture, the researcher claims that the intervention of the teacher or a competent other is necessary. In other words, scaffolding is needed in such cases.

The ultimate aim of teaching and learning a second language should be to enable learners to operate actively in the world through the second language as suggested by Grenfell (2000:11). To achieve this goal the view of teaching methods should be altered. As pointed out by Richards (1999:35), the history of language teaching during the last century advocated the belief that improvements in language teaching pertain to improvements in the quality of methods. These methods always prescribe teachers and learners' roles in the classroom. They also prescribe the instructional material to be used and teaching/learning activities to be carried out. All this ignores an important fact about the dynamic nature of teaching. Richards (1999:36) states that studies of classroom events showed that teaching is not static or fixed in time but rather it is dynamic and entails an interactional process between the teacher and the learners. He does not clarify how the interactional process occurs. Therefore, teachers' decisions in choosing their instructional tasks and activities can be influenced by what goes on at a certain time in the classroom.

According to Richards (1999:35) there are two approaches to language teaching. One is traditional, conceptualizing teaching as an application of a teaching method which is almost imposed on teachers and learners, prescribing what roles they have to play. The other one "starts with the observable processes of classroom teaching and learning, from which methodological principles and practices in language teaching are derived." Richards (1999) rightly terms this approach 'effective teaching'. This approach, as noticed by Richards (1999:48), assumes that the investigation of effective teaching and learning strategies is pivotal and continuous element of the process of teaching. In other words it is a process-oriented methodology of teaching. As pointed out by Richards (1999:47), there has been little attempt to link theories of learning strategies with more general theories of teaching. However, theories of learning strategies, if not linked with teaching theories would not help unsuccessful learners to succeed, as the learning strategies advocates claim. The ultimate aim of research in learning strategies, as this study claims, is to find a practical way to take learning strategies into the classroom. In doing so, it should be borne in mind that teachers must avoid teaching learners a lot of

new learning strategies at one time to avoid overloading them with strategies that may prevent learners from operating them properly. To overcome this situation, teachers as aforementioned, should raise learners' awareness of the strategies they intend to introduce. Grenfell (2000:17) claims that to present learners with elements of language which are far beyond their current competence will easily lead to overload and prevent them from using the language properly. These elements, as viewed by Vygotsky are outside learners' zone of proximal development (ZPD) (2000:17).

Encouraging students to work collaboratively may reduce the difficulties some learners encounter since a competent peer may help the less capable one. Achieving this goal entails a practical method of linking the theories of learning strategies with the teaching theories. To achieve this goal, the researcher relies on Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, assuming that psychological development and instruction are socially embedded as pointed out by Hedegaard (1996:171). Therefore, teachers can help students to operate appropriate learning strategies that might be beyond their own abilities by giving them models and using these strategies in front of the class. At the same time teachers can put learners into groups gathering individuals of different abilities, then letting the more capable ones to assist the less able learners, assuming that students in certain circumstances can offer the same type of support and guidance for each other that children receive from adults as suggested by Donato (1998:39).

#### ***4.6.1 Critical Pedagogy:***

Achieving what has been claimed above entails a change in the way we view teaching itself and a change in the relation between learners and teachers, hence the emergence of critical pedagogy. Learners are no longer passive vessels waiting to be filled with knowledge by teachers. Critical pedagogy ( hereafter, CP) can be traced back to the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. Freire as stated by Hall (2002:113), criticized the traditional model of education as being grounded on conceptualising learning as a matter of transferring or depositing neutral, cost-effective and internationally appropriate information into the awaiting empty heads of students. In contrast to the traditional model, according to Hall (2002), Freire developed an approach which encourages learners to create their own voices, responding to their local conditions and circumstances in order to be able to transform their lives something socially

meaningful. In this way, teachers and learners may build together a common base of knowledge. According to Kumaravadivelu (2012:82) general educationists were able to solidify Freire's ideas into what has been known as critical pedagogy.

Critical Pedagogy entered the field of applied linguistics recently as asserted by Canagarajah (2005:931). This same author thinks that CP is not a mere set of ideas but it is a way of accomplishing learning and teaching. This view is very important because it views CP from practical points of view rather than looking at it as another theory of teaching and learning. What matters is what it adds to the teaching and learning processes. As Canagarajah (2005) confirms critical students and practitioners are ready to locate learning in the pertinent social contexts, untangle the implicated power of pedagogical activity and actively transform the means and ends of learning. This way they may build a more egalitarian, equal and ethical education and social environment. Having said that, an important question is whether CP is a method or an alternative to method all together. Canagarajah (2005) rightly answers this question by suggesting that defining CP in a practice-oriented manner makes it possible to infer that it is not just another method or a way of teaching L2. It is a new paradigm for teaching L2. However, according to the same author there is no consensus among instructors. Some consider CP as one of the more methods which range from grammar-translation method up to learner strategy training. Others view it as a special school, i.e. cognitive process, contrastive rhetoric. CP is considered to be revolutionizing education. In the researcher's point of view, CP suits Omani students well. As a report released by the World Bank (2008) cited in Al-Issan and Al-Abulushi (2012), education in Oman is the responsibility of the government in terms of curricula and syllabi design, materials and textbook production. Moreover, education in Oman, as it is the case in all Middle East and North African countries, is more concerned with delivering and memorizing facts, the passive repetition of definitions passively and acquiring declarative knowledge rather than procedural knowledge. This shows the focus is on teacher-centered processes at the expense of learner-centeredness and development of higher-order cognitive skills.

Therefore, if CP is introduced in Oman, education could be reformed and the students who exit Basic Education or Post Basic Education may be more skillful. This entails a shift from product-oriented to process-oriented strategies. The methods that lead

to a process-oriented paradigm are task-based teaching, learner-strategy training, learner-centered pedagogies, and learner-autonomy practices (Canagarajah, 2005:938). However, the researcher echoes Prabhu (1990), in saying that there is no superior method. In adopting any teaching methods, teachers should respond directly to students' needs and their learning styles, and taking into account students' cultures and social conditions which are relevant to classroom contexts. This is what Kumaravadivelu (1994) calls post-method conditions (Canagarajah, 2005:939). As Richards and Rodgers (2001:248) state, in an attempt to implement approaches and methods, teachers do not consider the context in which teaching and learning take place, i.e. the cultural context, the political context, the local institutional context and the classroom environment. A good example of this is what Hu (2002:93) refers to as a failure of implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the Chinese context. He attributes the failure of CLT adoption in the country to the Chinese culture of learning. He argues that CLT and the Chinese culture are in contrast in terms of philosophical assumptions about the teaching and learning nature, the view of expected roles and responsibilities of both teachers and learners, learning strategies employed and also the qualities Chinese teachers and students' value.

What Hu (2002) claims above is in line with the claim made by Richards and Rodgers (2001:248). These authors argue that trying to introduce CLT in countries which have very different educational traditions from the countries in which CLT was developed, e.g. UK and USA, may be described as "cultural imperialism" because the implied assumptions and practices of the CLT which are considered correct would replace those of the target culture. The same is true for Omani education institutes which, according to their Islamic culture, may view the roles of teachers and learners differently.

On the other hand, in the domain of CP, as Cohen et al (2011:37) argue, educators must work according to the lived experiences that students bring to the pedagogical environment instead of forcing a domination of curriculum that reproduces social inequality. For the education to be emancipatory, teachers "are to transform the experience of domination in students and empower them to become 'emancipated' in a full democracy." Students, in this way are more active and considered to be participants rather than merely receiving information and knowledge from teachers without questioning.

In Oman educators are aware of this fact. A closer look at syllabuses today and in the past reveals that there has been a gradual shift from an alien culture to a local one. As confirmed by Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi (2012:150), the first two syllabuses were written and produced in England by Longman, while the third one was written and produced locally. The more recent syllabus is far better, as stated by the same authors, the themes and topics which are included in the textbook basically represent students' choices. Thus the researcher claims that learning strategies instruction is suitable in Oman and it goes in line with the CP field which emphasizes process-oriented approaches.

#### ***4.7 Conclusion of the Literature Review***

The previous three chapters have reviewed literature concerned with learning strategies, sociocultural perspective and methods of teaching English as a foreign/second language. Despite the abundant research which investigates language learning strategies, taking them into classroom has not been given much attention. The sociocultural perspective was also presented and could be seen from the literature that some scholars see a big gulf between this perspective and the cognitive theory and view them as parallel perspectives. In terms of teaching methods, the literature presents different opinions, debates and how some scholars have been preparing for the post-method era.

This study is an attempt to take language learning strategies into classroom within the framework of the superficially contrasting paradigms; cognitive and sociocultural perspectives. It also attempts to pave the way for a flexible teaching method that enables learners to be autonomous and take a more vigorous role in the classroom and in self-study.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Methodology**

#### ***5. Introduction***

This chapter aims to provide the conceptual framework of the research and why the researcher has decided to adopt a mixed methods approach

As stated in the introduction chapter, this study is a multidisciplinary one and to be able to investigate and inquire data from different sources, the researcher applied a mixed methods approach. The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of teaching methods on the use of learning strategies employed by learners in a foreign language context. This chapter discusses the methodology, the method applied, the design of the study, the sample of the project and how the students that participated in the study were selected and the teachers who involved. The chapter also argues and gives justification for choosing a mixed methods approach. It shows the ethical criteria followed to maintain the confidentiality of the information obtained from the participants. Moreover, the chapter sheds light on the theoretical background of the methodology adopted and the worldview of the researcher that justifies the choice of the mixed methods approach.

Since the purpose of the study is to examine the impact of teaching methods on the use of learning strategies, the best method to apply, in the researcher's opinion, is the mixed method. The mixed method, as noticed by Bergman (2008:11), is one of the most utilised methods in research methodology today. According to him, its aims and benefits seem to be simple because by adopting this method, the researcher needs to make use of the most appropriate combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Denscombe (2008), cited in Cohen et al (2011), also suggests that by using mixed methods research, the researcher can guarantee the accuracy of data collected and is able to provide a clearer image of the problem under investigation than would be expected by a mono-method. Moreover, the researcher will be able to develop the analysis based on the original data.

#### ***5.1 Research Paradigm***

Bryman (1988:4) defines a paradigm as group of beliefs or principals which influence scientists, in a particular field, what should be studied, how to do research, how

to interpret results and so on. Another definition of the paradigm comes from Rubin and Babbie (2011:47) who define it as "a fundamental model or scheme that organizes our observations and makes sense of them." In their opinion the paradigm does not provide answers to important questions, it can show where to get the answers. Both definitions emphasize that paradigms light the way for the researcher to be able to investigate, interpret and analyze their findings properly.

Research paradigms are therefore more important than research methods as asserted by Guba and Lincoln (1994) cited in Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:20). In a later edition of the same book these authors clarify that the paradigms they considered at that time were positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism (Guba and Lincoln, 2005:192). That is to say they did not include pragmatism in their definition. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) believe that for the pragmatism, the research question is more important than either the method used or the worldview which is supposed to motivate the method. The researcher views the paradigm as the umbrella under which the research questions and methods are brought forth and this way they incorporate each other. All research requires a theoretical base for its inquiry, as asserted by Creswell and Clark (2007), so the research paradigm provides the foundation to researchers as referred by Kuhn (1970) cited in Rubin and Babbie (2011:47) who views paradigms as the basic points of view that portray a science which is on its search for meaning. So as noticed by Rubin and Babbie (2011:53) it is not easy to distinguish between theory and paradigm. However, these authors differentiate by them. In their opinion, "paradigms are general frameworks for looking at life", while a theory "is a systematic set of interrelated statement intended to explain some aspect of social life or enrich our sense of how people conduct and find meaning in their daily life." It is worth mentioning that Creswell (2009:10) prefers the word 'worldview' to 'paradigm'. He thinks that the word 'worldview' offers a general orientation regarding the world and the nature of the research as the researcher views. However, his definition "a basic set of beliefs that guide action" is virtually the same.

Reviewing the above views reveals that the paradigm held by the researcher may determine whether the researcher will embrace a qualitative, a quantitative, or a mixed

methods approach to carry out his/her research. Accordingly, the researcher may choose positivism, post-positivism, constructivism, or pragmatism.

Considering that which mentioned above, this study followed a pragmatic approach which mixes quantitative and qualitative approaches, i.e. the mixed methods approach.

Mixed methods research is considered to be a new paradigm. It is as claimed by Cohen et al (2011), to be an important approach which is determined by pragmatists to provide real answers to actual questions which are essential for the real world. Oxford (2011:231) claims that a mixed methods approach is very essential in the field of learning strategy research. She argues that these methods are not contrasting poles but they are in fact complementary approaches. Creswell and Clark (2007: pp 8-9) share the same view and state more clearly that the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches maintains a better understanding of the research problem under investigation than when only one approach is adopted. Oxford (2011:231) also claims that mixed methods are influenced by the pragmatic worldview of Dewey. Creswell and Clark (2007:23) are also of the opinion that pragmatism is associated with mixed methods research. They state that the focus of the pragmatic worldview is on the outcomes of the research, that is to say, on the fundamentality of the question posed rather than the methods. In other words, the various ways data were collected shed light on the problems that are being investigated.

Cohen et al (2011:23) asserted that “mixed methods approaches are premised on pragmatism ontologies and epistemologies.” In their opinion, being pragmatic is more practical than being idealistic. Denscombe (2007:116) shares the same opinion and claims that pragmatism is considered as the philosophical partner for the mixed methods approach. Claiming that pragmatism underpins the mixed methods approach requires acknowledging that this approach is distinguishable from purely quantitative approaches which are based on a philosophy of positivism and from purely qualitative approaches which are founded on a philosophy of interpretivism as suggested by Denscombe (2007:116).

As defined by Denscombe (2007), the term ‘mixed methods’ refers to research that uses a combination of alternative approaches in a single research project crossing the borders of traditional paradigms by intentionally combining methods that belong to



different traditions with different assumptions. The mixed methods approach has a number of different names, such as, 'mixed methodology', 'multi strategy research' 'integrated method' 'multitrait/multi-method research', 'combined methods' and quantitative and qualitative method (Denscombe: 2007) and Creswell and Clark (2007). As stated by Bergman (2008), mixed method research design is becoming increasingly popular in research methodology at the present time. Cohen et al (2011:22) claim that mixed methods research being comparatively a discipline in its infancy in comparison to other types of research, has a range of different definitions. These varieties of definitions, in their opinion, are due to the fact that authors have different views about "where and when the mixing takes place, the breadth and scope of the mixing, the reasons for the mixing, and the orientation of the research." Therefore, any researcher who adopts the mixed methods approach should clearly state why and how he/she is applying it and should delineate his/her worldview.

In spite of being a young discipline, a mixed methods approach can be successfully utilized and may increase the accuracy of the data collected since it can operate at all stages and levels of the research. Creswell and Tashakkori (2007), cited in Cohen et al (2011:22), stated four different fields of the mixed methods approach. According to these authors, the methods adopted to collect the research data are quantitative and qualitative. The methodologies applied utilize mixed methods as a distinct methodology which may integrate worldviews, research questions, methods, findings and conclusions. The paradigms which underpin the approach should be clearly stated. Then the procedures of the mixed methods in the research design should be clearly articulated. Thus the authors rightly claim that the mixed methods approach operate on all stages and levels of the research.

As stated above, there is no consensus among scholars about the mixed methods approach. There are debates on the mixed methods research design which are grounded on methodological claims. The opponents argue that it is not easy to use the mixed method without difficulty. Their views are based on the fact that qualitative research methods are explicitly linked with constructivism but qualitative methods, are associated with positivism (Bergman, 2008:11).

In spite of his claim that mixed methods research cannot claim to narrow the gap between positivism and constructivism, Bergman (2008:19) thinks that it is possible to provide a substitute to mono- method designs and it is one of the most exciting research designs in the social sciences. There are scholars who are against the polarization of research into paradigms such as qualitative versus quantitative approaches, for example Ercikan and Roth (2006), cited in Cohen et al (2011:21). Cohen et al (2011) claim that there is compatibility between the two paradigms. As pointed out by Creswell and Clark (2007:xv), “Mixed methods research has been gaining in acceptance and becoming more common in studies across social sciences, including diverse fields such as sociology, nursing, health, management, evaluation, and education.”

### ***5.2 Genesis of Mixed Methods Approach***

This section focuses on the different views of the mixed methods approach and how it comes into existence. The researcher then outlines the justifications of using the mixed methods approach in his study. As claimed by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009:266), the quantitative research design was the only design choice during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and it was the first research paradigm that incorporated most of the principles and methodological assumptions such as ontology, epistemology, axiology, and rhetoric. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century those who were opposed to the quantitative research started using the qualitative paradigm. In the 1960s as asserted by the same authors, the idea of combining the two approaches came into existence. However, the strategy of the mixed methods is not new in the history of social research, what is relatively new is the classification of something called the ‘Mixed Methods approach’ as pointed out by Denscombe (2007:106), According to Creswell and Clark (2007:9) mixed methods research compensates for the weakness of both quantitative and qualitative research. For example, the quantitative research is weak, because it may not interpret the context or the setting in which people talk. Moreover, the voices of the subjects participating in the study may not directly be heard, so qualitative approach may fill these gaps. On the other hand, the weaknesses in the qualitative approach lie in the personal interpretations of the researcher and it is also difficult to generalize the findings to a large group because in such an approach the number of participants is limited. These weaknesses are not found in the other paradigm. In this way, the two approaches, when combined, are compatible and

may provide strengths that may offset the weaknesses of the other paradigm. Therefore, as stated by Creswell and Clark (2007:9), mixed methods stimulate researchers to analyze data collected by the two approaches.

As stated by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:3), the quantitative methods were used by the positivist paradigm, while qualitative methods were adopted by the constructivist paradigm. Guba and Lincoln (1994), cited in Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:3), define *paradigm* “as the worldviews or belief systems that guide researchers.” Positivists and constructivists paradigms are constructed from the different ways people look at social reality and from the way they interpret it. These conceptions can be approached by examining the explicit and implicit assumptions underlying them as suggested by Cohen et al (2011:5). These assumptions, as asserted by Cohen et al (2011), are either the ontological type, i.e. assumptions that concern the nature or essence of the social phenomena under investigations, or the epistemological kind, i.e. those which concern the foundation of knowledge as its nature and form and how they are communicated to other human beings.

There is a third assumption that is concerned with human nature and specifically with the relationship between human beings and their environment. As stated by Cohen et al (2011) these assumptions portray people in two different ways: one visualizes people responding passively and deterministically towards their environment making no decisions of their own; the other image of human beings is different in that it portrays people as active initiators and active who create their own world. The former view is classified as determinism, and the latter as voluntarism.

As confirmed by Cohen et al (2011), the above mentioned assumptions have their effect on the researchers and the methodology they adopt because each view demands a different research method. According to Creswell and Clark (2007:21), research, whatsoever it may be, needs a base for its investigation; thus, researchers need to be familiar with the paradigm of their studies. Researchers who start inquiry or investigation without this theoretical background may waste much time either adopting an unsuitable approach or applying the wrong tools. Therefore, researchers who are familiar with the worldviews and the foundation for their research may adopt an objectivist approach; that is, a positivist approach, employing the use of research tools such as surveys, experiments

and so on. Others may adopt a subjectivist approach, that is, an anti-positivist approach which entails portraying people as far more subjective. These researchers may use research tools such as observation and personal contacts. Having said this, the next section discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the mixed methods approach.

#### ***5.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of Mixed Methods Approach***

This section focuses on the pros and cons of the mixed methods approach. As can be gathered from what has been mentioned above, the mixed method approach has some obvious advantages. For example, it can provide a full description and a complete picture of the problem being probed by yielding more than one perspective taking into consideration the merits of using different formats or methods for collecting data. As noticed by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:118) the mixed methods approach emphasizes the integration of different approaches and urges the researcher to find out how and why the different methods and information collected complement each other. It was mentioned earlier that the mixed method approach is “problem-driven rather than theory driven.” Its worldview is pragmatism (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). One of the exciting aspects of mixed method research, as asserted by Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006:48-49), is the fact that in one study both practical questions and different views can be explored.

However, in spite of the benefits of the mixed methods approach, there are also many drawbacks. For example, as pointed out by Denscombe (2007:119) the combination of methods to collect data is time consuming. Thus researchers having to collect and analyze qualitative data may reduce their sample size in order to minimize the time which may in turn affect the data collected since it may not be representative of the whole population, and may therefore be dangerous to generalize. Another limitation is that, because the mixed methods approach is still in its adolescence, it is relatively unknown and confusing to many researchers, as noticed by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009:266). For this reason researchers are required to develop and exercise skills that may cover both quantitative and qualitative approaches as suggested by Denscombe (2007:119). To overcome these limitations, researchers are required to possess knowledge of a wide range of literature and understanding of the nature of mixed method research. The next section turns to design.

### **5.5 Design**

To begin with, the following hypothesis was addressed to focus the purpose of the study, 'Students whose attentions are turned by their teachers and peers to use varieties of learning strategies and avoid the ineffective ones become better learners and more effective (learning strategies) users than those who are left on their own.' The hypothesis was followed by the research questions, as will be shown later.

The study as stated above follows a mixed methods research design. This triangulation has been used to strengthen the validity of the results. The types of the research questions raised necessitate the use of the mixed methods approach. As pointed out by Cohen et al (2011:24) mixed method research addresses both quantitative and qualitative data. Moreover, Tashakkori and Creswell (2007:207) cited in Cohen et al (2011) assert that a well-built mixed study starts with a similar mixed research question. Denscombe (2007:116) shares the same opinion and points out that it is not only the methods and analysis which are mixed, but also the nature of the research questions and entire style of research.

The study raises these questions to be investigated and inquired. When scrutinized closely, these questions require the integration of quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure that the answers are not biased towards one or the other. The research questions are as follow:

- To what extent do teachers perceive the frequency of their students' use of learning strategies? The research question was emerged from the researcher's own experience that some teachers deny that students use learning strategies, while others think they are used albeit ineffectively. For this question, a qualitative data might yield an elaborated answer, while a quantitative data might provide a concise response both from teachers and learners.
- In what ways do teachers help learners to utilize learning strategies and to shift from the ineffective to the most effective ones? Here qualitative data might give an indication as to what teachers do in the classroom to help their students.
- What is the role of English language proficiency in employing language learning strategies? For this question numerical data can provide the researcher with a correlation between the two factors.

- What are the language learning strategies reported being utilized by the participants learning English in a foreign language context? For this question quantitative and qualitative data collected can provide the needed answers.
- Would learning strategies instruction lead to awareness of the learning strategies process on the part of students and would instruction encourage them to apply these strategies beyond the classroom? For this inquiry quantitative and qualitative data are expected to provide more concrete answers because questionnaire statements might remind the students of the strategies they use, which may otherwise be unable to remember during an interview. An interview will also be conducted to elicit from the students the learning strategies they actually use and to complement their self-reported answers.
- To what extent are students able to operate in the zone of proximal development when receiving assistance needed to learn from teachers and more capable peers? For this question an interview and students' diaries, alongside the researcher's own observation, will be used.

To investigate the above research questions, the researcher adopted a mixed methods approach. Therefore, the researcher conducted a questionnaire (see appendix A) for students who were chosen randomly to participate in the study- as will be explained later- and the teachers who teach English at the University of Nizwa. Moreover, some students who participated in the study were interviewed (see appendix D). The researcher also used his own observations and notes written down during his teaching. Furthermore, teachers were interviewed to collect more information on the way students use learning strategies and to collect their own views on their students' self-regulated learning strategies. This way the researcher can ensure that the findings of the research can guarantee a complete image of the problems to be investigated.

### ***5.6 The sample of the study***

The students who participated in the study were selected from those who enrolled in English 2 (general English level 2) at the University of Nizwa in the Sultanate of Oman (see the introduction chapter). The University of Nizwa is in the city of Nizwa in the Interior of Oman (Dakhiliah Region). The university is an English medium institution. Therefore, students have to spend almost one year at the Foundation Institute

to study English language. They study intensive English programmes conducted by native speakers (mainly from North America and a small number from Britain and Australia). At the end of the programme, students sit for the TOEFL exams. The minimum score to enroll at the university is 500. Those who score between 450 to 499 are allowed to register for certain credit hours, provided that they re-sit the TOEFL exam and attend remedial programmes specially designed for them at the Foundation Institute. There are four colleges at the university. These are: the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Engineering, the School of Nursing and Pharmacy, and the College of Business Administrations. English language skills are a university requirement for all students. They must study English in two semesters; English 1 (ENGL150) and English 2 (ENGL252).

The participants of the study were selected randomly from among those who were enrolled in English 2. The rationale for choosing them was to investigate the extent to which students utilize learning strategies and whether they might be able to transfer those strategies when they study their own subjects in English.

### ***5.7 Ethical Consideration***

The awareness of ethical concerns by researchers in dealing with individuals is crucial. As noticed by Cohen et al (2011:75) researchers need to strike a balance between the demands they shoulder as scientists in their effort to investigate and find the truth and the rights of the participants of the study, which might be threatened. Oxford (2011) asserted that since the collection, analysis and interpretation of data is sensitive; participants should be fully informed about the aim and the nature of the study. Participants should be told about their rights and reminded that they have every right to withdraw. Taking all of these factors into consideration, the researcher contacted the dean of the college of Arts and Sciences, asking for permission to conduct the questionnaire and provided a copy thereof. The nature of the project was clearly outlined in both Arabic and English, affirming that all the information obtained will be confidential and that it would be disclosed to no one but the researcher himself. It was clearly stated that the information given would not affect the performance or the grades of their English 2 grades (see appendix A).

The participants were randomly selected as the focus for this study from four sections (class rooms). Two were assigned as a control group and others as an experimental group. The control group and experimental group were taught by different teachers; who were also selected at random. The researcher and another teacher taught the experimental group, with another two teachers teaching the control group. This was done to maintain the objectivity of the results. There was a backup class for each group in case any unexpected thing happens, therefore, the researchers has asked the Dean for six classes.

### ***5.8 Instrumentation and Data Collection Strategies***

The researcher used a variety of instrumentation to collect the data. As pointed out by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:95) a considerable number of researchers now collect both quantitative and qualitative data in one single study. The researcher conducted a questionnaire based on Oxford's (1990) SILL with slight changes to suit the current situation (see Appendix A). Another questionnaire was designed specifically for the teachers (see Appendix C). The questions for the interviews (see Appendix C/D) regarding learners and teachers were specifically developed for this study. The aim of the interview questions was to further investigate and inquire into the use of learning strategies and to probe teachers' on their views towards learners' use of these strategies. Moreover, the researcher collected some information from his own observations during the semester. He requested that his students to prepare their own diaries, writing down the learning strategies that they utilized on their own and through the help of their teacher and more able peers. The questions for the interview and questionnaire were reviewed by the supervision team and in order to confirm the validity of the questions, they were also reviewed by teachers who hold PhD degrees and teach at the University of Nizwa.

In addition to this, a pilot study was conducted during the spring semester in the academic year 2010/2011 to establish validity and to guarantee that the SILL questionnaire was understood by the students.

#### ***5.8.1. Strategy Questionnaire***

This study, as mentioned above, conducted a questionnaire (SILL) designed by Oxford (1990a) with a slight modifications to suit the Omani context. The researcher used SILL because it is one of the most widely used strategy questionnaire as asserted by



many scholars, for example, Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995), Oxford et al (2004), and Chamot (2008). The questionnaire asked the participants to report their frequency use of learning strategies. The questionnaire was conducted at the beginning of the semester before any actual teaching started in order to find out the strategies learners use on their own with no intervention from a teacher or more able peers. At the end of the semester (almost 4 months later), the same SILL inventory was administered to discover the impact of learning strategies instruction on the use of learning strategies. The study hypothesized that students whose attentions are turned by their teachers and peers to use varieties of learning strategies and avoid the ineffective ones become better learners and more effective (learning strategies) users than those who are left to their own devices. The difference between the learning strategies used before and after the instruction may be attributed to the impact of teaching methods on the use of their strategies. It occurred to the researcher to translating the SILL into Arabic but the piloting scheme revealed that the English version is fully understandable and because the questionnaire was administered during the class, the students received assistance from the teacher in the event that they needed any clarification. The main purpose of the SILL was to explore the types of strategies used by the students. The questionnaire statement ranged from memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies to metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies.

The participants were asked to give particular background information before commencing with the questionnaire. The information needed was their gender, TOFEL score, English 1 grade and their ID number. For confidentiality and ethical considerations the writing of names was optional. This information was essential because the researcher was interested in all of the above items to explore the effect English proficiency on the use of learning strategies. The researcher was also keen to discover whether these factors have any effect on utilizing and benefiting from the learning strategies instruction and from the help that given by peers.

### ***5.8.2 Validity of the Questionnaire***

Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995:7) define validity as the degree to which an instrument measures what it supposes to measure. Therefore, this study uses SILL which has a high validity as asserted by two scholars (Oxford and Burry-Stock, 1995:7).

### ***5.8.3 Teachers' Questionnaire***

The term 'questionnaire' seems to be a familiar word but in reality it is not. Brown (2001:6) gives a comprehensive definition "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers." According to the same author, questionnaires are used to obtain certain facts from the respondent concerning, for instance, demographic characteristics, location of residence, marital status, their social or economical level, education, jobs, language learning history and so on and so forth. Behavioural questions aim at finding out what are the participants are currently doing or have previously done. They may cover participant's life-style, habits and personal history. There are also attitudinal questions that focus on people's beliefs, interests and values. Therefore, questionnaires cover a range of different areas which makes them popular among graduate students as noticed by Nunan (1992:143).

The teachers' questionnaire used in this study covered the first and the third types, i.e. factual and attitudinal questions. Constructing a valid and a reliable questionnaire requires specialization, that not anyone is eligible to construct one as suggested by Nunan (1992:143). Based on Nunan's opinion, the following criteria should be considered when constructing a questionnaire:

- Questionnaire items are either closed or open ended. The first type requires the research to set possible responses beforehand; the latter requires the participant to decide on their own what to say and how to say it.
- The wording of the question is crucial. The questionnaire should include leading questions that reveal the researcher's attitude. Moreover, the questions should not be complex or ambiguous and should ask no more than one thing at a time.
- Culturally biased questions should be avoided.

As a matter of fact all the above points were considered when the researcher constructed his own questionnaire for the teachers who participated in the study. The questionnaire was mainly consisted of demographical information and asked the teachers to rank the learning strategies which were supposed to be employed by students. The aim of the teachers' rankings was to establish their perceptions of the frequency use of students' use of learning strategies, (see Appendix C ).

Generally speaking questionnaires may be used more effectively for collecting data on large scale bases, while interviews may be used also effectively but with a few respondents. The following section is about interviews.

#### ***5.8.4 Interview Questions***

Interviews are important tools used to collect data for a qualitative method in applied linguistics.. Many researchers emphasize the importance of the interview in this field. For example, Nunan (1992) claims that the oral interview has been commonly used by researchers as a research tool in the domain of applied Linguistics. Dornyei (2007:134) also states that the interview is the most frequently used tool in qualitative approaches. Moreover Cohen et al (2011:409) assert the same notion by stating that "Interviews are a widely used instrument for data collection". As noticed by Cohen et al (2011:409) interviews are flexible research tools in terms of channels of communication. The researcher can use verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard channels.

Moreover, it has been used by researchers in the field of second language acquisition to investigate processes of acquisition and by language testers to assess the interviewees' proficiency. It has also been used by sociolinguists to investigate linguistic variations, conversation analysis, pragmatics and different aspects of cultures. The interview also helps researchers to interpret the topic in question in depth and to be able to exchange ideas with those who work in the same field. As Cohen et al (2011:409) suggests, interviews enable both interviewers and interviewees to discuss their understanding of the world with which they are concerned with and to express their own point of view in relation to the situations in which they are interested.

This indicates that interviews are useful tools for investigation. In the current study the interview is used to complement other tools such as questionnaires, observations and students' diaries.

Nunan (1992:149) places interviews on a continuum ranging from unstructured, semi-structured and structured. An unstructured one is controlled by the responses of the interviewee rather than direction of the researcher. The semi-structured interview is predicable and the researcher can control the interview although s/he has no predetermined questions. The third type structured, is the most formal type. In this type, as stated by Dornyei (2007:135), the researcher follows predetermined questions for

every interviewee. The researcher followed this type bearing in mind its advantages and disadvantages.

The positive aspects of structured interviews, echoing Dornyei (2007:135), are that the interviewees will focus on the topic area concerned and that the interview covers the areas specified. Therefore, the answers are comparable among all those who participate. The negative aspects of the structural interview are that it lacks room for variation or natural responses. It also lacks flexibility, leaving nothing to chance. The current researcher tried to strike a balance and did his best to overcome the disadvantages of the structured interview by giving chances to the interviewee to feel free and add whatever they want to.

For the interview to fulfill what it has been constructed for, certain criteria should be considered. Kitwood (1977) cited in Cohen et al (2011) elucidates three conceptions of an interview. First, if the interviewer does their job properly by establishing a rapport and asking questions in an appropriate manner, and at the same time the participant is sincere and is willing to participate, the data collected may be accurate. Skillful researchers will not allow bias to filter into their research. The second point is how to control human behaviour in terms of emotions, unconscious needs and interpersonal influences. The third point is that the interviewer should bear in mind that the interview is a social encounter as pointed out by Walford (2001:90) cited in Cohen et al (2011:410).

As with the questionnaire, the researcher piloted the interview with a few teachers first to find out whether the questions generated the information required. Nunan (1992:151) suggests that interview questions should be piloted on a small sample before being officially used. The teachers who participated in the pilot were native speakers and were deliberately selected in order to check the quality of the questions as well. As advised by those who took part, some questions were amended, some were removed and others were added.

#### ***5.8.5 Validity and Reliability in Students' Interview***

According to Cohen et al (2011) validity is defined as whether the interview questions measure what they claim to measure. The reliability in their opinion is controlled by a highly structured interview. To guarantee validity, the researcher constructed the interview in such a way as to cover the same areas covered by the SILL

which has a high validity as will be explained later in Chapter Six. For the reliability, the interview constructed was a structured one and all the participants were asked the same questions.

#### ***5.8.6 Researcher's Observations***

As stated above the researcher embraced a mixed methods approach to collect the data for this study. One of the important tools used in collecting the information is the observation. Observation as pointed out by Denscombe (2007:207) " offers the social researcher a distinct way of collecting data." Cohen et al (2011) define observation as "a widely used means of data collection and it takes many forms." As noticed by the same authors, observation is distinguished from other tools by offering the researcher the chances to collect data occurring naturally in social situations and enables the him/her to look at event happening in situ rather than depending on others' accounts. Robson (2002:310) cited in Cohen et al (2011:456) points out that what people actually do may be different from what they claim to do. Therefore by using this tool, the researcher may compare what learning strategies the students claimed to be using with what they actually use. For example, whether they use dictionaries, underline and highlight keywords, help each other. Teachers will be able know the extent to which less able students benefit from more able peers. Observation also reveals whether students socially help each other.

Denscombe (2007:207) divides observation into systematic and participant observation. Systematic observation, which has its origin in social psychology, is mainly concerned with interaction in settings similar to classrooms (Croll, 1986, Flanders, 1970), and Simon and Boyer, 1970) all cited in Denscombe (2007).The second kind is participant observation, which is linked with sociology and anthropology, is mainly used to interpret culture and interactions of the investigated groups. The former is normally associated with quantitative data, while the latter with the qualitative data.

As with other research tools, the aim of the observational data is to answer the research questions (Cohen: 2011). As suggested by Simpson and Tuson (2003) cited in Cohen et al (2011:459) observers should consider the following points:

- What is the focus of the observation?
- The reason for the observation.
- What are the research questions that need to be answered?

- What should be included and excluded while observing?
- How the observational data should be recorded?
- Where the observation should take place?
- Specify what is to be observed.
- Specify the subjects to be observed.
- Specify the kind of observation, i.e. systematic, structured, or descriptive.
- How the observation is to take place, human resources, video cameras ...etc.
- Problems anticipated.
- The processes and analysis of the data collected from observation.

The above points need to be considered when carrying out any observation. The researcher observed his classrooms (TG classes). The research questions the observational data would address were mainly two. The first was to find out the extent to which the students were able to operate in the zone of proximal development when the less able ones received assistance from the teacher (the researcher) and from more able peers. The other point to be observed was to find out whether students who consistently achieve high marks in the exams employed learning strategies differently or use different learning strategies.

The purpose of the observation was to gain an in-depth knowledge of how students use their learning strategies and how they gain help from each other and from their teacher. In order to record his observation, the researcher kept with him a teaching journal which is in the form of a note book in which he could write down his/her observations, reflections and any other thoughts related to teaching. Teaching journals can be useful as a source of discussion, reflection or assessment (Richards and Farrell: 2005:68). The observations were carried out under the following headers:

1. What learning strategies do the students frequently use, for example to understand a reading text which has unfamiliar words.
2. What learning strategies do students frequently use when they are asked to write a paragraph(s)?
3. How do 'good language learners' differ in terms of learning strategies from the other students?

4. How do the more able students help the less able ones?
5. How do the less able students benefit from the more able ones and the teacher in dealing with a specific skill, e.g. reading and writing?

As asserted by Richards and Farrell (2005:69) journal writing helps the teacher to record his/her classroom activities and observations. In order for the journal writing to be effective, these authors suggest that the researcher should set goals for the journal. That is to say they should decide why they want to do journal writing and what do they want to achieve from it. Then they should decide who their audience is, i.e. for whom they are writing and how much time is allocated for journal writing. It should be revised regularly. The journal writing familiarized teachers with their students' performance in the classroom and their interactions with each other and with their teacher as well as giving the teachers hints in structuring interview questions.

Friedman (2012) points out a number of checklists to guide researchers in their observations. These checklists are:

1. Setting: This concerns the physical space and the objects which are there and whether there are any designated areas for specific activities.
2. People (or actors): The researchers need to know who are the people that use the space and how do they use it, next, how does the space facilitate or hinder their actions. And finally how do they interact with each other?
3. Behaviour: Researchers need to observe how people behave in the space and whether there are rules governing the behaviour in the space? Finally, they need to know the routine activities that take place there?

#### **5.8.7 Diary**

The diary is another tool which were used to collect data from students besides the questionnaire and the interview. The diaries were used to answer these research questions:

- What are the Language Learning Strategies Reported being utilized by the Participants Learning English in A Foreign Language Context? For this question quantitative and qualitative data collected can provide the needed answers.
- Would learning strategies instruction lead to awareness to learning strategies process on the part of students and would they encourage them to apply these

strategies beyond the classroom? For this inquiry quantitative and qualitative data are expected to provide more concrete answers because questionnaire statements might remind the strategies they use and might not be able to remember during an interview. Also an interview will be conducted to elicit from the students the learning strategies they actually use and to complement their self-reported answers.

- To what extent are students able to operate in the zone of proximal development when receiving assistance needed to learn from teachers and more capable peers?

Diaries as asserted by Nunan (1992) are essential introspective instruments used by language researchers. The objectives of using diaries,

based on Nunan (1992) and Yang (2003), are:

1. To enable students to articulate problems that they face while learning and therefore enabling them to get help from teachers and the more able ones.
2. To encourage students to learn on their own (autonomous learning).
3. To motivate students to exchange ideas with their teachers and more able peers in order to gain confidence and make sense of difficult materials.
4. To encourage students to generate more productive class discussion.
5. To encourage students make links between course materials and their own learning strategies and teaching strategies.
6. To create teacher-student and student-student interaction outside the classroom.
7. To make the class process oriented rather than product oriented.
8. To reflect on the progress students make in the English course.
9. To evaluate the strengths and weakness in students' learning.
10. To draw a roadmap for future autonomous learning.

Diaries help students to become more effective, to depend on themselves and to be able to evaluate their learning procedures. As pointed out by Williams and Burden (1997), language teachers should encourage students to become autonomous. Therefore, diaries can be used to allow students be closely observe their weaknesses, strengths and progress. This may be achieved by writing down on a daily or weekly basis, all the steps they follow in learning or in the effort they exert to learn.

The researcher, in order to facilitate students' learning and help develop students' autonomous learning asked them to keep diaries in which they could write down their



observation about their learning processes. They were told that the diaries were completely unrelated to their marks and that they should not write their names or disclose their identities under any circumstances.

To help them write well, the researcher provided them with the following guidelines:

1. Go over the work you have done during this month and decide which activities (e.g. Moodle exercises, assignments, extensive reading or course work) were the most meaningful, whether inside or outside the classroom.
2. Give an example of a piece of work completed during this month that shows your ability to use English in any of the four skill areas (listening, reading, writing, and speaking).
3. Write a short paragraph to show your progress.
4. Write a letter to your instructor describing the following:
  - How you are improving your weakest areas or increasing your skills.
  - How much you benefit from the learning strategies your teacher has introduced.
  - Whether you started using new learning strategies.
  - How much you benefit from other students.
  - The assessment of your effort in the class.

### ***5.9 Summary***

The present study was carried out following the mixed methods approach in two phases. The first phase was at the start of the semester to investigate the students' use of learning strategies before teachers' intervention. The second phase was at the end of the semester to gauge the effect of teachers' intervention and to explore the extent to which teaching methods influenced students' learning strategies. The research tools used were questionnaires, interviews, students' diary and the researcher's observation. The questionnaire was used to generate self-reported data concerning learning strategies employed by the students to enhance their learning at the beginning and end of the semester. The students of the TG were interviewed before and after teachers' intervention. The observations carried out by the researcher throughout the semester, were discussed with the other professor who was teaching the second classroom and exchanged ideas with him.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Data Descriptions, Analysis, and Findings**

#### ***6.0. Description of the Sample***

This chapter focuses on the presentation of the results and the findings of the study. The focus of Chapter Seven is the discussion of these results.

The participants of this study were 140 foreign language learners of EFL (males 19 and females 121) studying at the University of Nizwa in the Sultanate of Oman. The students were from different majors. They were taking English Language 2 (ENGL152) as a university requirement. Their ages ranged between 18-22 years. All the participants were Omanis and had Arabic as their mother tongue. They studied English as a foreign language for 9 years at schools (about 4-5 hours a week) and almost one to two semesters in the Foundation Institute at the university depending on the level of their English language proficiency. All those who enroll at the university after the Foundation Institute are required to show proof of their English proficiency to be able to study in English at their colleges and departments, e.g. College of Pharmacy and Nursing, College of Engineering and Department of Education. They must abide by the university regulations and obtain at least 450-500 on the TOEFL to start their majors. Otherwise, they must attend remedial programmes at the Foundation Institute to improve their English proficiency. The participants were selected randomly from among 8 sections (almost 300 students). Two classes were chosen to be the control group and two others to be the experimental group. A professor of English agreed to teach one of the experimental groups and the other class was taught by the researcher himself. The control group teachers agreed to distribute the questionnaire to their students.

The participants were informed that the participation was voluntary and that they were not required to give their names, only disclosing their ID numbers, gender, and TOEFL scores. The time allocated for the questionnaire was almost 50 minutes (any individual student may ask for more). It was conducted during the lecture time with permission from the Dean (Appendix F). Moreover, the participants were assured that the questionnaire unrelated to the marks of their exams and it was at their direction to participate or to withdraw at anytime.

## **6.1. Instruments**

The first of the instruments used in this study was the questionnaire as will be illustrated in what follows.

### **6.1.1. Questionnaire (SILL)**

Oxford's SILL (1990) version 7.0, which is mainly designed for learners of English, was used, accompanied by a set of bio-data in order to interpret the results adequately in terms of English proficiency in using the LLSs and in benefiting from the LLSs instruction. According to Green and Oxford (1995:261) SILL is a self report survey which has been the key instrument in more than 40 studies, including several dissertations and theses. The version of SILL that is used in this study was modified to suit the situation of Omani students. After some modifications, it contains 35 items following the six subset strategy taxonomy classified by Oxford (1990a). There are five items on memory strategy, eleven on cognitive strategy, four on compensation strategy, six on meta-cognitive strategy, three on affective strategy, and six on social strategy. SILL was chosen because it is the most often used in terms of strategy scale around the world as asserted by Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995:1). It was decided that SILL would not be translated into Arabic, because it was noted that during the pilot, students had no difficulty in understanding SILL in English. It was also assumed that the process of translating might alter the original meaning of the SILL items.

SILL was administered at the start and end of the Spring Semester during the academic year 2011-2012. This means there was an almost four months interval between them. The first one was to find out the learning strategies used by the students themselves and the second was to measure the effect of language learning strategies instruction.

### **6.1.2. Validity and Reliability**

According to Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995), the validity -which is the degree to which an instrument such as SILL measures what it supposes to measure- of the SILL is based on its predictive and correlative association with language performance, in addition to its relationship to sensory preferences. According to the same authors the reliability – which is the degree of precision or accuracy the instrument scores- of the SILL is noticeable across diversities of cultural groups.

## **6.2. Data Analysis**

The data collected from the participants' responses to the questionnaire were computed via descriptive statistics, Independent-sample T-test, One-way ANOVA and Box-plots. The researcher is aware of the fact that box-plots are rarely used in the second language research. Despite this, he has decided to use them because he believes that visual summaries of information are as important as numerical ones as asserted by Larson-Hall and Herrington (2009:368). Although bar-lots are more popular than box-plots, the latter are more informative than the former, as noticed by Larson-Hall and Herrington (2009:369). Box-plots, as will be noticed in this study, provide the reader with more information about the distribution of scores. Moreover, they indicate more clearly the degree of dispersion, skewness and outliers. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. The data collected by other means, such as interviews and observations, were analyzed quantitatively.

The findings of the analysis will be the focus of the next section.

## **6.3. The Findings**

The findings which are presented below show how learning strategies were ranked by the students.

*Table 6.1 shows means, standard deviations and the ranks of the learning strategies employed by The TG and the CG at the beginning and end of the semester )*

Treatment and Control Groups		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Memory strategies	Treatment	70	3.39	.52	2
	Control	70	3.34	.41	3
Cognitive strategies	Treatment	70	3.20	.49	6
	Control	70	3.21	.41	5
Compensation strategies	Treatment	70	3.35	.52	4
	Control	70	3.40	.57	2
Metacognitive strategies	Treatment	70	3.60	.51	1
	Control	70	3.55	.50	1
Affective strategies	Treatment	70	3.38	.58	3
	Control	70	3.27	.55	4
Social strategies	Treatment	70	3.22	.51	5
	Control	70	3.15	.60	6

### **6.3.1 The Learning Strategies Ranking**

The descriptive statistics of Table 6.1 demonstrate that metacognitive strategies head the list of learning strategies for both the Treatment Group (hereafter TG) and the Control Group (hereafter CG). They have the highest mean (3.60, 3.55) respectively, followed by memory strategies (3.34 TG) and compensation strategies (3.40 CG), affective strategies (3.38) by the treatment students and affective strategies (3.38) by the control group, memory strategies (3.34) by the treatment group and compensation strategies (3.35) by the treatment group, affective strategies (3.27) by the control group. The least employed strategies by the treatment groups are social strategies (3.22) and cognitive strategies (3.20) and the lowest ranks by the control group are cognitive strategies (3.20) and social strategies 3.15). By studying the means of the two groups carefully one may notice they are almost similar, especially the high-ranking and low-ranking strategies. Although compensation strategies ranked high in the control group and low in the treatment group, the difference between the two means is not so vast (3.40 and 3.35). It is noticed that for the two groups metacognitive strategies ranked high while

cognitive strategies ranked low. These findings are inconsistent with those of Awadh's (2003), who claims that cognitive strategies are more frequently used by Omani students enrolled in the first year of Sultan Qaboos University than metacognitive strategies. She attributes this to the syllabus and the tasks which focus on cognitive strategies that require students simply to memorize the language. In the researcher's opinion Awadh's results were influenced by the way she divided the learning strategies. She classified learning strategies into seven categories: grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing and listening. She analyzed each group separately. Probably students reported the way they learn grammatical rules and vocabulary. This study is consistent with another one conducted in Saudi Arabia by McMullen (2009) in which metacognitive ranked as the first category.

Table 6.1 shows the two groups are almost homogeneous. This similarity of the two groups may indicate that the students were honest in responding to the questionnaire and that they were not exaggerating in their answers. Therefore, this consistency of the answers may give confidence that the data collected may represent a valid picture of what it aims to represent. However, to be more confident, the researcher combined both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

***Table 6.2 shows the summary statistics of means, standard deviations and the ranks of the learning strategies employed by the participants (Treatment and Control Group after treatment)***

**Group Statistics**

Treatment and Control Groups		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Memory strategies	Treatment	70	3.96	.35	2
	Control	70	3.35	.35	3
Cognitive strategies	Treatment	70	3.76	.25	4
	Control	70	3.40	.34	1
Comp. strategies	Treatment	70	3.84	.47	3
	Control	70	3.34	.53	4
Meta. strategies	Treatment	70	3.97	.36	1
	Control	70	3.37	.38	2
Affect. strategies	Treatment	70	3.67	.50	6
	Control	70	3.32	.56	5
Social strategies	Treatment	70	3.72	.34	5
	Control	70	3.27	.46	6

Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 2. Closer scrutiny to Table 2 reveals the differences between the two groups after the TG was taught. The TG still ranked metacognitive strategies as the first category with a mean of (3.97) while the CG ranked cognitive strategies the first category. One may notice that memory strategies ranked in the second place (3.96) by the TG and came third (3.35) among the CG. This is not surprising because as mentioned elsewhere, Arabic speakers tend to use the strategy of rote learning as a result of transferal from the way they were used to memorizing the Holy Qur'an and Prophet Mohammed's (Peace be Upon him) sayings (*ahadith*), alongside Arabic poetry at schools in former times. Compensation strategies ranked the third most frequently used by the TG (M. 3.84), while it ranked fourth by the CG (3.34). It is worth mentioning that before the treatment it ranked fourth (3.35) by the TG and third (3.40) by the CG.

Cognitive strategies ranked fourth category by the TG (M. 3.76) and first by the CG (M. 3.76). Although cognitive strategies which enhance students' learning by practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning...etc are important (Oxford: 1990), metacognitive strategies are essential because learners without these strategies are considered to be without direction, having little or no opportunity to organize their learning, trace their progress and review what they have done so far to prepare for their future learning direction (O'Malley and Chamot: 1990).

Both groups made progress in cognitive strategies at the end of the semester, however, the CG made a noticeable progress in these strategies and this may be at the expense of metacognitive strategies (in the beginning the mean was 3.55 and at the end of the semester it dropped to 3.35). The social strategies which were the least frequently used by the two groups may indicate that the TG did not change its attitude towards cooperative work, although, regarding the means one may notice some progress (M3.22, 3.72). During the semester group work was encouraged and less able students were assisted by the more advanced learners operating in their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This may be attributed to the way these students review their lessons outside the classroom, the fact that that these students come from different regions of Oman and that they may not work together outside the classroom. This needs further investigation and research. Another noticeable observation to be made is that both groups gave a low

ranking to affective strategies, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> respectively. According to Oxford (1990:163) learners lower their anxiety by using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, using music, using laughter, making positive statement, discussing feelings with someone else, and so on and so forth. The fact that these students belong to a conservative society may justify why they, the majority being females, rank these strategies low. This assumption also invites further research.

### ***6.3.2. The Impact of Teaching on the Use of Learning Strategies***

There is a proliferation of writings on language learning strategies, but few have investigated the impact of teaching methods on the use of these strategies. The following sections attempt to investigate whether the teaching of these strategies affect their use and consolidate them or whether should students be left alone to choose whatsoever they deem to be most suitable for them.

#### ***6.3.2.1 The Comparison between the Treatment Group and the Control Group***

In what follows the researcher investigates the impact of teaching and cooperative work on the use of learning strategies bearing in mind the following hypothesis 'students whose attentions are turned by their teachers and peers to use varieties of learning strategies and avoid the ineffective ones become better learners and more effective (learning strategies) users than those who are left on their own.'. The null hypothesis postulates that there is no difference between them. First, the researcher makes comparisons between the TG and the CG to see whether they are different or in fact the same. To determine this, independent sample t-test and box-plots were conducted.

English proficiency was considered to be a moderate variable that might affect the frequency these students use learning strategies. Therefore, one- way ANOVA and Eta squared were performed to gauge this effect and to measure any association between students TOEFL grades (proficiency level) and the use of learning strategies. This was also to establish whether students' level in English has any role in the way students benefit from the teaching of learning strategies.

In what follows, the researcher has examined the 6 groups of the strategies self-perceived by the students to probe the effect of teachers' intervention and cooperative work in their use and preference of these strategies and to find out whether English



proficiency has any role to play in students' choices. The direct strategies will be analyzed first, then followed by the indirect ones.

### ***Memory Strategies:***

This section examines the frequent use of memory strategies at the beginning and at the end of the semester to understand how teachers' intervention and help received from more able peers affect the use of these strategies by the students. Two tools were chosen for this, box-plots and t-test. These two tools complement each other. To use independent-sample t-test, the following three conditions must be fulfilled (Carver and Nash: 2009): 1. Independent samples. 2. Normal populations. 3. Equal population variances (for small samples). Therefore, prior to performing this tool, the researcher used to checked to see whether the data met these conditions, for example by using the box-plot.

***Figure 6.1: Box-plots Depict Memory Strategies at the beginning of the Semester.***

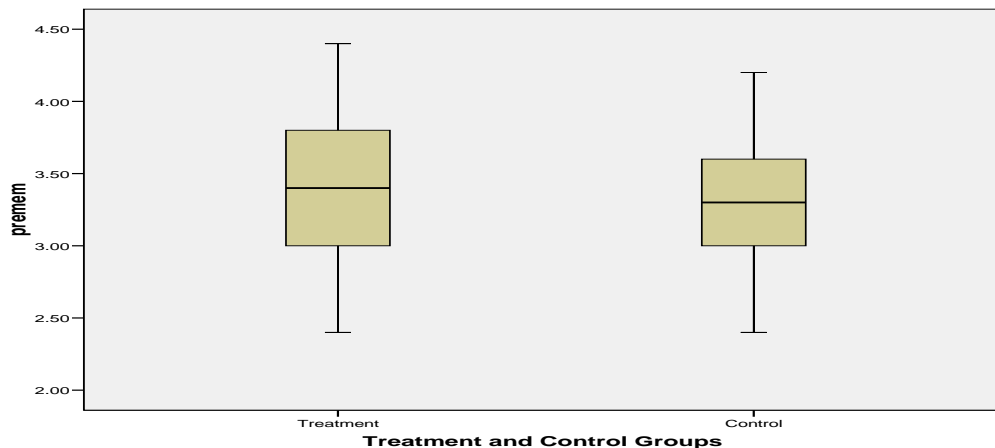


Figure 6.1 shows the results for the memory strategies used frequently by the learners. The box-plots display the data of the TG and the CG before the TG was taught. The boxes that represent the TG (on the left) and the CG (on the right) show the median point. In both of them the median line lies in the middle which indicates even distribution of the means across the two groups so the interquartile (IQR) range are almost similar. The whiskers of the two boxes are almost the same and none of them is skewed, which illustrates that the two groups at the beginning of the semester were symmetric. None of them shows an outlier, indicating that no points extend more than 1.5 times the IQR

above or below the box. Any difference that was observed between the two groups pertaining to the use of learning strategies may be attributed to the impact of the teaching methods adopted or/and the scaffolding provided by more able peers as hypothesized in this research.

**Figure 6.1.1: Box-plots Indicate Memory Strategies after Treatment.**

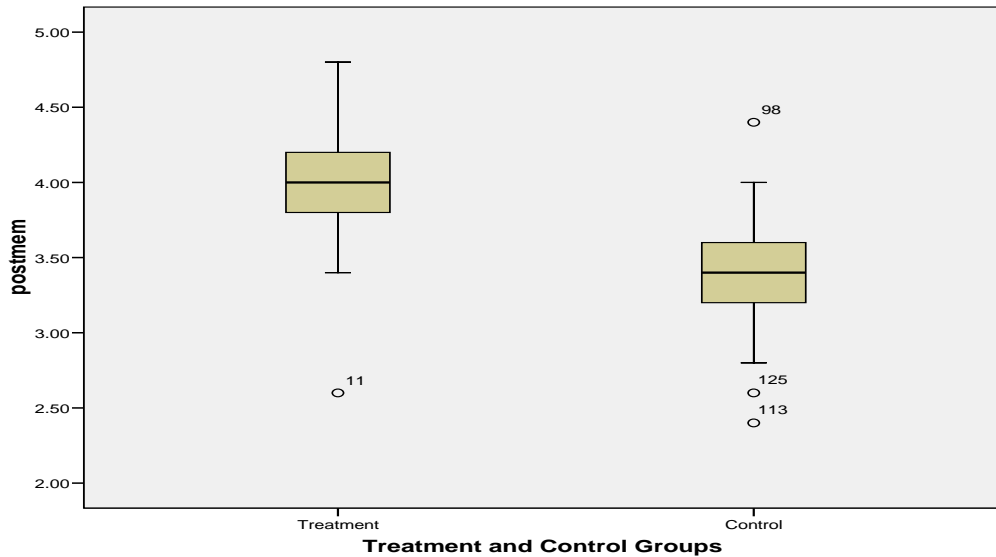


Figure 6.1.1 shows the results for the memory strategies used frequently by the learners in the TG and the CG after the TG after the intervention from teachers and scaffolding from more able peers occurred.

The box-plots show some variation across the group. For example the medians of the boxes in both box-plots indicate that the box of each group has the median in the centre. However, the boxes illustrate that there are different distributions of scores between the TG and the CG. For example, the distribution of the TG is positively skewed. The whisker is seen to be extended out to the maximum scores of distribution. There is one outlier below the box, indicating that one student was different from his/her group. Sometimes outliers may be the result of incorrect data entry. This was checked by the researcher and found that all the data were entered correctly. The box representing the CG has almost similar size whiskers which indicates the even distribution of scores. It has three outliers, one above the box, which may indicate that this student is far more advanced than his/her classmates, and there are two outlier below the box which may

indicate these two students less frequently use memory strategies in comparison to the rest of the class. The other research tool which was used to compare the memory strategies scores for the students during Spring Semester 2012 was the independent-sample t-test.

**Table 6.3 depicts Mean and Std. Deviation Memory Strategies in the two groups.**

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD
Pre-Memory Strategies	Treatment	70	3.39	.52
	Control	70	3.34	.41
Pos-Memory Strategies	Treatment	70	3.96	.36
	Control	70	3.35	.35

**Table 6.3.1 Results of the independent Samples Test (memory strategies).**

Variable	T	Df	Sig	Eta squared
Pre-Memory Strategies	.643	138	.522	
Post-Memory Strategies	10.16	138	.000	0.42

$p \leq .05$

A closer look at Table 6.3 and Table 6.3.1 reveals that there was similarity between the two groups before the teachers and more capable peers' intervened. For example, the TG scored ( $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD = .52$ ), and the CG scored ( $M = 3.34$ ,  $SD = .41$ ). There was no statistically significant difference between the two groups before the learning strategies were taught and group work was conducted. The  $p$ -value (2-tailed sig.) was .522 which was more than .05. On the other hand, the tables show dissimilar direction between the two groups at the end of the semester, i.e. after the interventions of teachers and more able peers. For instance, the TG scored ( $M. = 3.96$ ,  $SD = .36$ ) and the CG scored ( $M = 3.35$ ,  $SD = .35$ ). There was a significant difference between the two means. The sig. (2-tailed) was .000 which was less than the  $p$  value .05. The magnitude of the difference was very large (eta squared = 0.42. This difference may be attributed to the intervention of teachers and help from more capable ones.

In the following section, the researcher examines the effect of English proficiency on the use of memory strategies. To be more confident about the results, box-plots and one-way-ANOVA were used. Before performing one-way ANOVA, the assumptions required should be reviewed. This type of ANOVA requires three conditions for reliable results (Carver and Nash: 2009). These are: 1. Independent sample. 2. Normal population. 3. Homogeneity (or quality) of populations. The researcher has borne in mind these three conditions before performing one-way ANOVA.

**Figure 6.1.2 Box-plots Show the Impact of English proficiency on TG Memory strategies (at the beginning of the semester).**

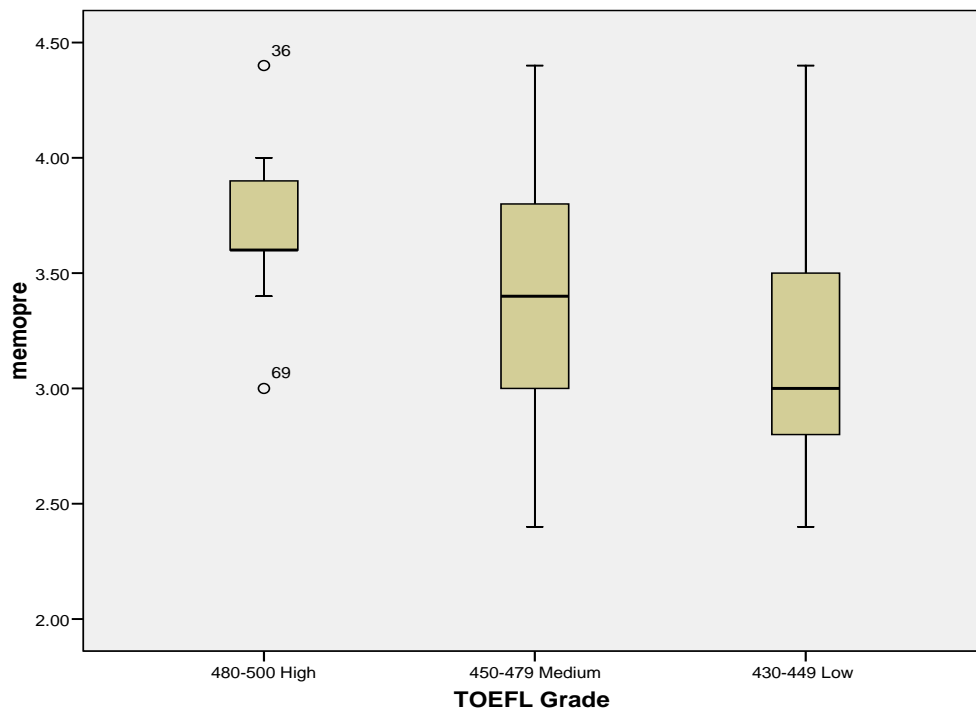
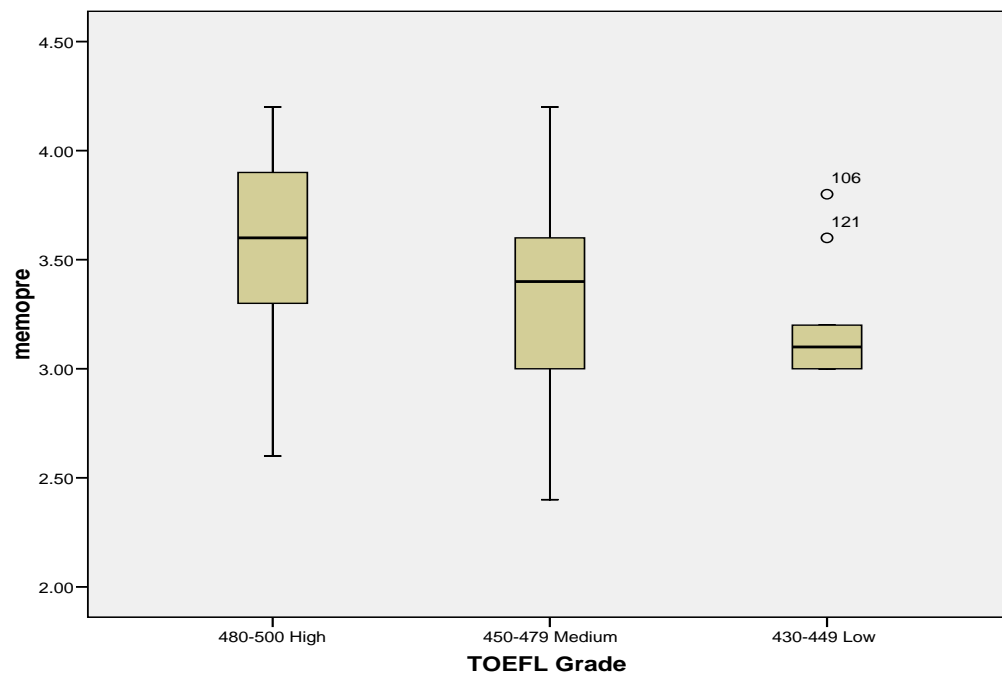


Figure 6.1.2 shows the box-plot of the effect of English proficiency on the memory strategies of TG at the beginning of the semester. It shows how the median scores of each group is quite different. It indicates that the higher the scores of TOEFL, the more frequency they used the memory strategies. The lower the grade, the less frequency they used the memory strategies. The box representing the high achievers is skewed because the median line is not in the centre of the box. The whiskers are not the

same size, the tail of the whisker is extended below the box indicating that it is negatively skewed with the majority of scores concentrated towards the upper end of the scale. The medium achievers' box has a normal distribution because the median line is almost in the middle and the whiskers are of equal size. The low achievers box is at the bottom. It is skewed because the median is not in the centre of the box. To sum up, the three scores of the box-plots are not normally distributed indicating that the English proficiency level may impact the use of memory strategies on the learners which may be investigated further by using ANOVA.

***Figure 6.1.2.1 Box-plots Show the Impact of English proficiency on CG Memory strategies (at the beginning of the semester).***



Figures 6.1.2.1 shows the impact of learning strategies on the memory strategies reported being used by the CG. The figure visualizes the different distribution of median scores across the three groups of learners. Similar to the TG, the higher the grade, the more frequently they used the strategies. it can be seen that the box representing the low

achievers has no whiskers which indicates that the majority of the students were concentrated in IQR. It has also two outliers above the box which may illustrate that these two students are different from the others in terms of their scores. Throughout the study considerable number of outliers was detected in all the groups which needs further investigation in future research.

This study supports the claim that English language proficiency has impact on the use of learning strategies.

**Figure 6.1.3 Box-plots Show the Impact of English Proficiency on Memory Strategies of the CG (at the end of the semester).**

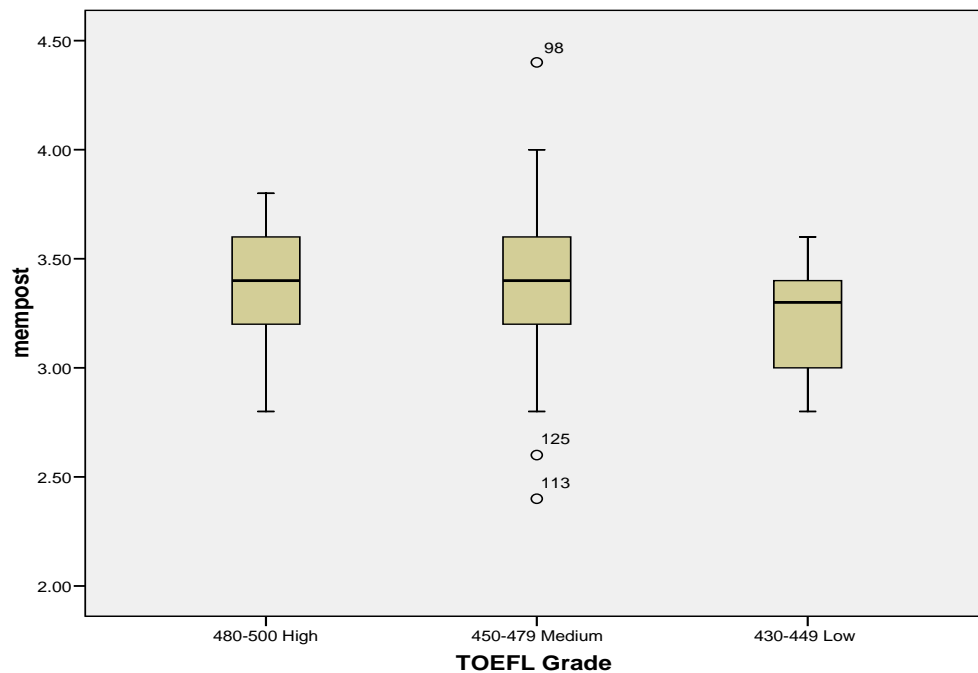


Figure 6.1.3 clearly shows the boxplot post-memory scores of the end of the semester questionnaire of the CG. The medians of high and medium achievers were not different and the median of the low achievers was slightly different from the other two groups. They also show that the range of variations in high and medium groups around

the median was almost symmetrical. The low group is also different because it has a big variation around the median.

**Table 6.3.2** Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene Statistic	df 1	df 2	Sig.
Memopre	1.72	2	67	.18
memopost	.60	2	67	.55

**Table 6.3.3** Illustrates Output from the One-Way ANOVA: Omnibus One-Way ANOVA

	Df	F	Sig.
Memopre between the groups	2	1.39	.25
within the groups	67		
Memopre between the groups	2	.63	.53
within the groups	67		

The main effect of group was statistical,  $F = 1.39$ ,  $P = .25$  at the beginning of the semester and  $F = .63$ ,  $P = .53$  at the end of the semester.

**Table 6.3.4** Output from the One-Way ANOVA: Descriptive

Descriptive

	N	Mean	SD.
Premem 480-500 High	7	3.5	.53
450-479 Medium	53	3.3	.41
430-449 Low	10	3.2	.28
Total	70	3.3	.41
Postmem 480-500 High	7	3.3	.35
450-479 Medium	53	3.3	.37
430-449 Low	10	3.2	.24
Total	70	3.3	.35

As exemplified in Table6. 4 and 6.4.1, the means and standard deviations of memory strategies of the CG at the beginning of the semester for high level students were (M =3.5, SD. = .53) and at the end of the semester they were (M = 3.3, SD = .35), for medium level students, they were (M=3.3, SD = .41 at the beginning and (M =3.3, SD = .37). For the low level students they were (M = 3.2, SD .24 at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester (M =3.2, SD =.24).

Table6. 3.4 Tuky HSD

TOEFL grade	TOEFL grade	Sig.
480-500 High		.049
450-479 Medium		.003
430-449 Low		
450-479 Medium	480-500 High	.49
	430-449 Low	.156
430-449 Low	480-500 High	.003
	450-479 Medium	.156

The mean is significant at the .05 level

**Figure 6.1.3.1 Box-plots Show the Impact of English Proficiency on Memory Strategies of the T G (at the end of the semester).**

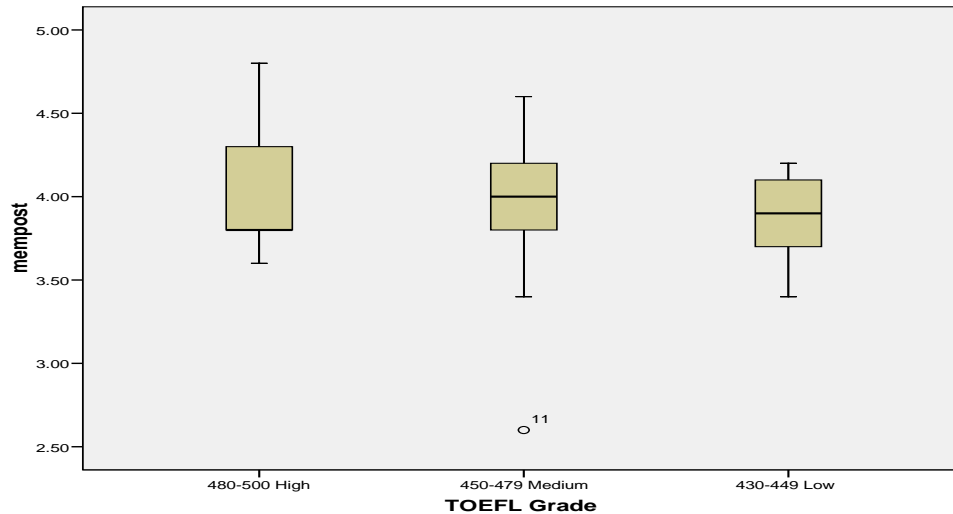




Figure 6.1.3.1 shows the same different variations across the TOEFL grades at the end of the semester. However, there is some improvement among those who scored 450-500. Also it is noticeable that the medians of the post-memory differed slightly from those of the pre-memory. The high achievers' box has the median line in the centre which indicates normal distribution of the means. However, it has two outliers, one above the box and another below the box. The other two boxes have asymmetrical distribution of scores as their medians are off the centre. The median achievers' box has one outlier. The low achievers' box has two asymmetrical whiskers which means that it is negatively skewed. By performing ANOVA, it is possible to find a significant difference between the groups.

The researcher has used the one-way ANOVA to investigate further whether English proficiency has any effect on the use of memory strategies. Table 3 shows the results of one-way ANOVA.

Before performing ANOVA, it is necessary to check the homogeneity of variances of the participants. The null hypothesis states that the population variances are equal.

***Table 2 Test of Homogeneity for Memory Strategies employed by the CG at the Beginning and End of Semester***

Table 6.3.5 Test of Homogeneity

	Levene Statistic	df 1	df 2	Sig.
Mem-pre	1.94	2	67	.23
Mem-post	.775	2	67	.46

According to the Test of Homogeneity of memory strategies employed by the TG at the beginning and at the end of the semester above, the Levene Statistic of the memory strategies before treatment has a value of 1.94 and a  $p$ -value of .23 which is greater than  $\alpha$  (.05). The Levene Statistic for the memory strategies after treatment also has a value of .77 with a corresponding  $p$ -value .46 which is more than  $\alpha$  (.05). Therefore, these data do not violate the homogeneity-of-variance assumption. Thus it is safe to proceed with ANOVA as follows.

**Table 6.3.6 Illustrates Output from the One-Way ANOVA: Omnibus One-Way ANOVA**

	Df	F	Sig.
Memopre between the groups	2	3.86	.026
within the groups	67		
Total	69		
Memopre between the groups	2	.73	.48
within the groups	67		

The main effect of group was statistical,  $F = 3.86$ ,  $P = .026$  at the beginning of the semester and  $F = .73$ ,  $P = .48$  at the end of the semester.

**Table 6.3.7 Output from the One-Way ANOVA: Descriptive**

	N	Mean	SD.
Premem 480-500 High	11	3.70	.36
450-479 Medium	43	3.39	.53
430-449 Low	16	3.16	.50
Total	70	3.39	.52
Postmem 480-500 High	11	4.05	.39
450-479 Medium	43	3.97	.38
430-449 Low	16	3.88	.25
Total	70	3.96	.35

As exemplified in Table 6.3.6 and 6.3.4, the means and standard deviations of memory strategies of the CG at the beginning of the semester for high level students were ( $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = .36$ ) and at the end of the semester were ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = .39$ ), for medium level students ( $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD = .53$  at the beginning and ( $M = 3.97$ ,  $SD = .38$ ). For the low level students ( $M = 3.16$ ,  $SD = .50$  at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester ( $M = 3.88$ ,  $SD = .25$ ).

**Table 6.3.8 Tukey HSD**

TOEFL grade	TOEFL grade	Sig.
Mem-pre 480-500 High	450-479 Medium	.16
	430-449 Low	.02
	450-479 Medium 480-500 High	.16
	430-449 Low	.26
	430-449 Low 480-500 High	.02
	450-479 Medium	.26
Mem-post	480-500 High 450-479 Medium	.79
	430-449 Low	.67
	450-479 Medium 480-500 High	.79
	430-449 Low	.67
	430-449 Low 480-500 High	.46
	450-479 Medium	.67

The mean is significant at the .05 level

As Table 46.3.8 indicates there was statistically significant difference between the impact of English proficiency between the beginning of the semester and the end of the semester on the memory strategies by the TG. It can be noticed that there is no significant difference seen at the end of the semester except between the high graders and low graders at the P-value (.02). This may be attributed to the help received by the intervention of the teacher and the more able students as will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

The following section investigates cognitive strategies.

***Cognitive Strategies:***

This section examines the second direct strategies reported to be used by students. The researcher has used the same tools to track how frequently students use the strategies as well as the impact that intervention from teachers and “good language learners” on the way students use them. First the box-plots are used to examine the suitability of using the

t-test and to find out the degree of dispersion, skewness and the outliers.. Then the t-test was performed to examine the difference of means between the two groups. Then the researcher has investigated the effect of English proficiency, as gauged by TOEFL grades, on the use of cognitive strategies.

**Figure 6.3: Box-plots Illustrate Cognitive Strategies before Treatment.**

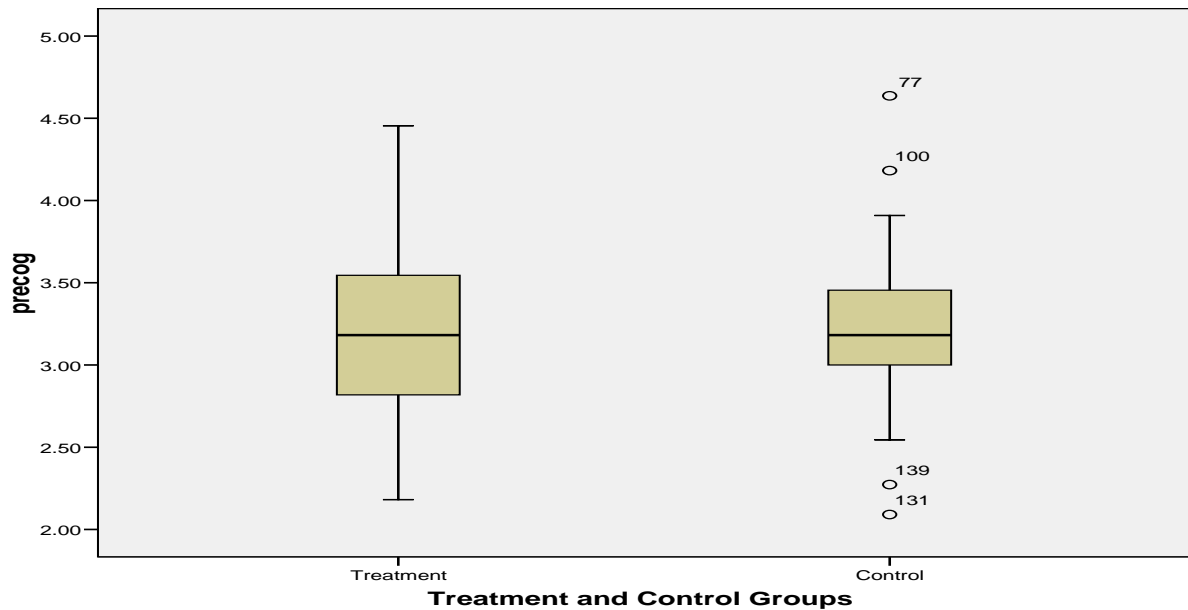
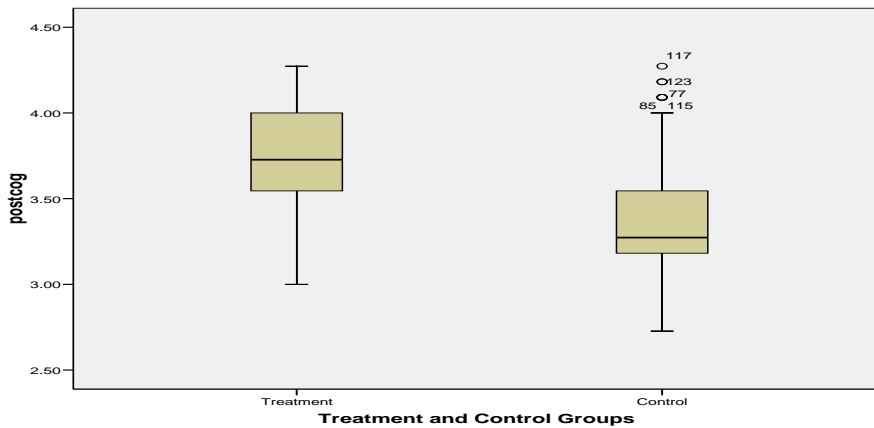


Figure 6.3 illustrate the box-plots of cognitive strategies of the two groups before the treatment. It is evident that the range of scores is wide for the TG as indicated by the length of the whiskers on either side of the box, but comparatively it is narrow for the CG. The CG has also some values as outliers. The box of the CG is slightly skewed since its median is not perfectly in the centre of the box. The CG has several outliers which may be attributed to the normal individual differences between the students. However, the differences between the two boxes are not so wide as to distort the group means. The following section displays the means of the two groups after the treatment.

**Figure 6.3.1 Box-plots Indicate Cognitive Strategies after Treatment**



A closer look at Figure 6.3.1 indicates that the two medians are different. The CG data are positively skewed and it has few outlier values. The median line of the CG is skewed and it is adjacent to the bottom of the box. Still the CG box has outliers. The whiskers of the TG box are not symmetrical around the median line. It is negatively skewed .with the majority of scores concentrated towards the upper end scale. The TG box has more top scores. Comparing the two boxes, the CG box is seen to have lower scores. The data displayed by the box-plot may reveal that the teachers' intervention and the collaborative learning have affected positively the frequency use of the cognitive strategies employed by the TG, which my support the research hypothesis. The shapes of the box-plots above indicate that it is suitable to perform t-test. The following section displays the data using the t-test.

**Table 6.4 depicts Mean and Std. Deviation of Cognitive Strategies of the two groups.**

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD
Pre-Cognitive Strategies	Treatment	70	3.20	.49
	Control	70	3.21	.41
Post-Cognitive Strategies	Treatment	70	3.76	.25
	Control	70	3.40	.35

**Table 6.4.1 depicts the independent Samples Test outcome:**

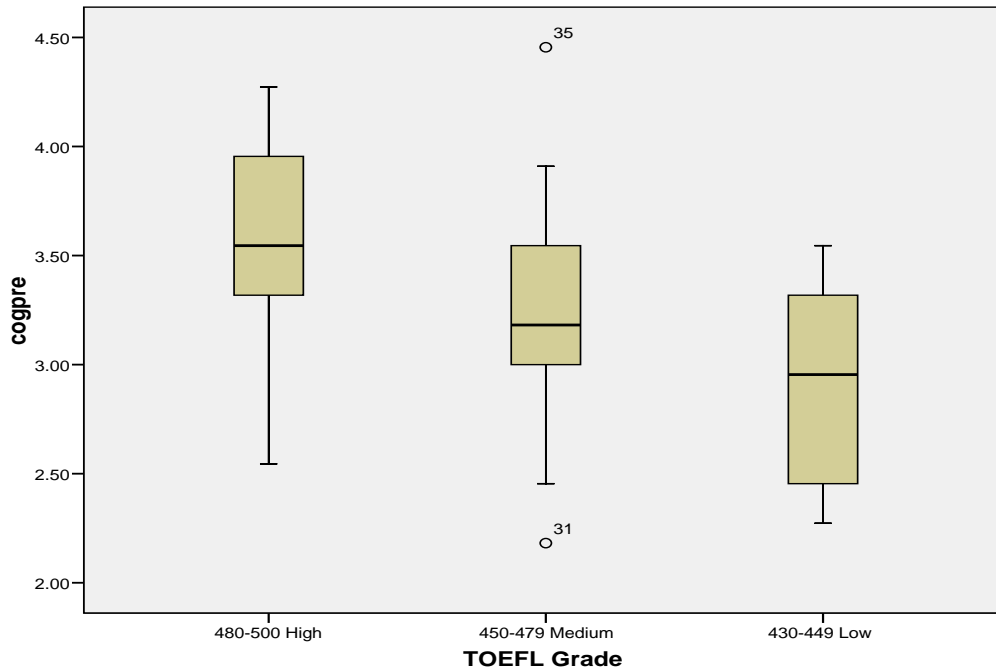
Variable	T	Df	Sig	Eta squared
Pre-Cognitive Strategies	.167	138	.868	
Post-Cognitive Strategies	7.4	138	.000	0.28

$p \leq .05$

Table 6 and Table 6.1 illustrate that there was similarity between the two groups at the beginning of the semester. For example, the TG scored ( $M = 3.20$ ,  $SD = .49$ ), and the CG scored ( $M = 3.21$ ,  $SD = .41$ ). There was no statistically significant difference between the two groups before the learning strategies were taught. The sig. (2-tailed) was .868 which was more than the  $p$ -value .05. On the other hand, the tables depict statistically significant differences between the two groups at the end of the semester, i.e. after teachers' intervention. For instance, the TG scored ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = .25$ ) and the CG scored ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = .35$ ). There was a significant difference between the two means. The sig. (2-tailed) was .000 which was less than the  $p$  value .05. It is noticeable that the magnitude of the difference in means was very large (eta squared = 0.28). This difference can be attributed to the intervention of teachers.

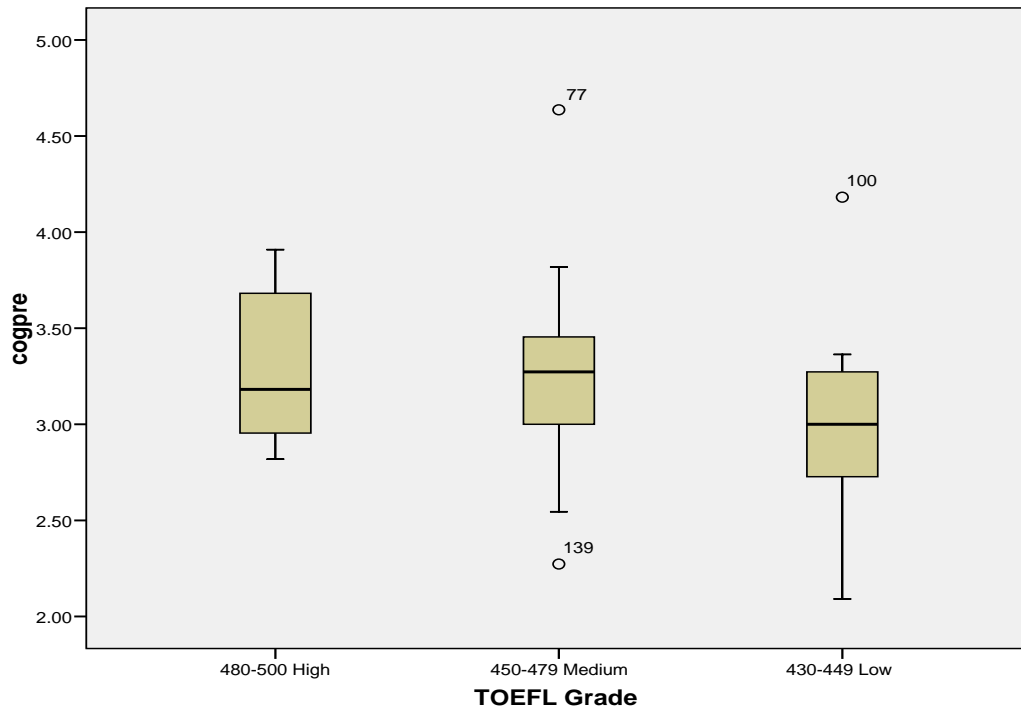
In the following section, the researcher examines the effects of English proficiency on the use of cognitive strategies both at the beginning and the end of the semester. To be more confident about the results, box-plots and one-way-ANOVA were used.

**Figure 6.3.2** *Box-plots Depict the Impact of English Proficiency on Cognitive Strategies of the TG (at the beginning of the semester).*



The box-plots in Figure 6.3.2 show some variations across the three TOEFL groups. The box of the students who scored 480-500 has positively skewed. The medians of the three groups are also different. The other distributions in Figure 3.2 are slightly skewed as well, since their medians are not perfectly centred on the whiskers. The box indicating the scores of the medium achievers has some values as outliers. This variety of the median distribution across the three different proficiency groups may show the impact of the level of the target language on the use of learning strategies.

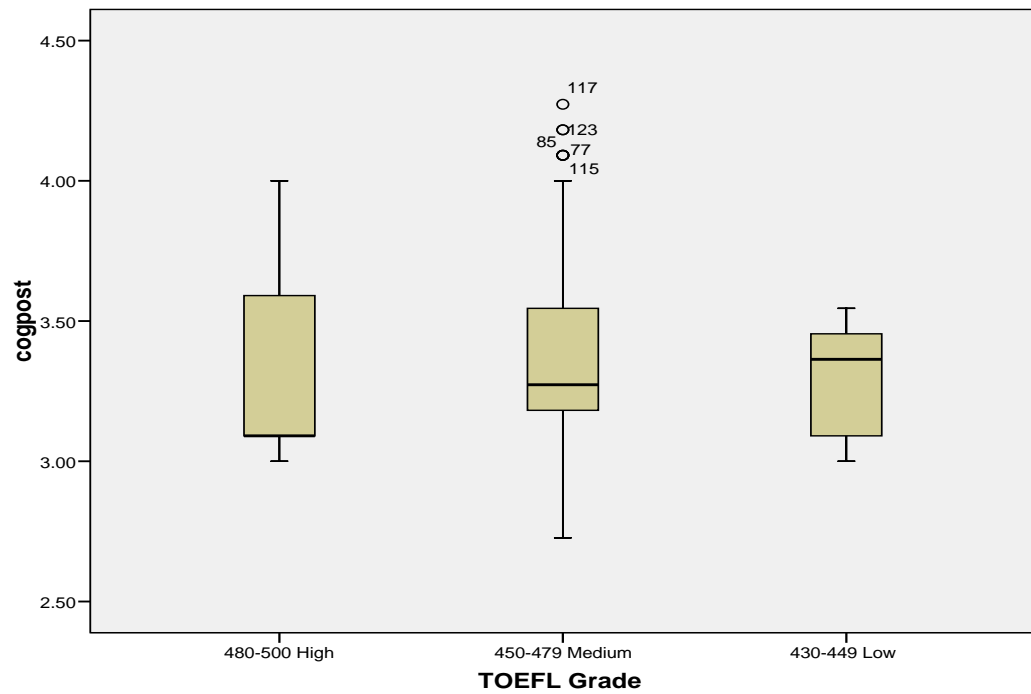
**Figure 6.3.2.1** *Box-plots Depict the Impact of English Proficiency on Cognitive Strategies of the CG (at the beginning of the semester).*



A closer look at Figure 6.3.2.1 shows the different distribution of the median scores across the three different level groups. The more frequent users of cognitive strategies were the high group and least frequent users were the low achievers. Medium and low achievers have outliers. This figure may also support that the English proficiency affects the use of language learning strategies. In what follows the researcher intends to explore whether the language proficiency increases or decreases the impact of teaching methods on the use of learning strategies when these strategies are introduced within cognitive and sociocultural perspectives, which will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

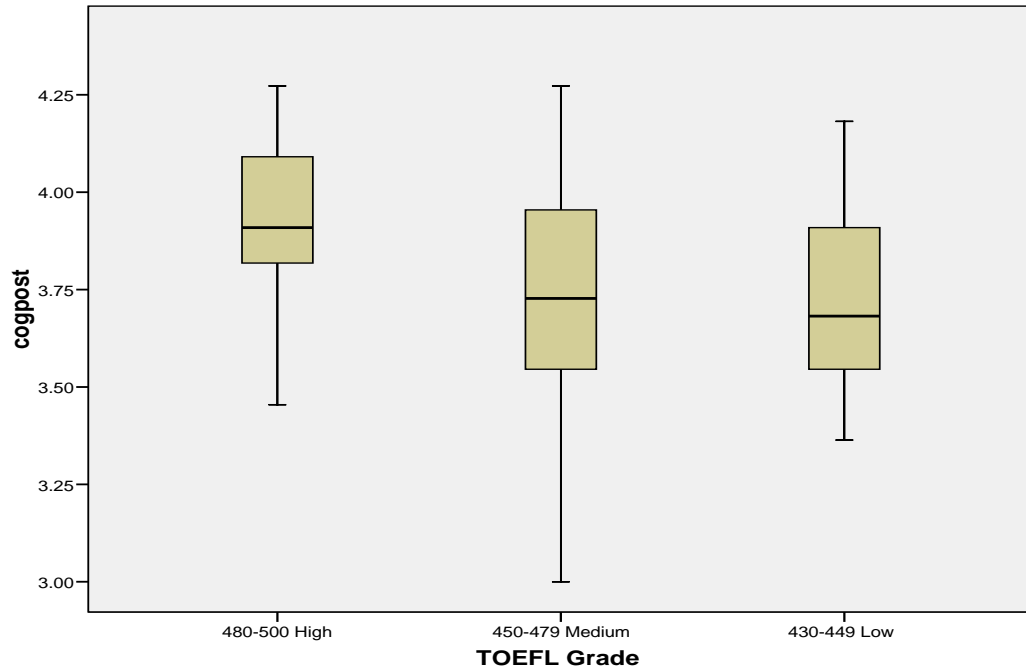


**Figure 6.3.3** *Box-plots illustrate the Impact of English Proficiency on Cognitive Strategies of CG (at the end of the semester)*



A closer scrutiny to the boxplot in Figure 6.3.3 reveals that there is a slight change between scores distribution of the CG at the beginning and end of the semester. For example, high achievers improved because the whisker above the box became longer and the median is at the bottom which indicates that the concentration of the means is towards the top of the box. The whiskers of the medium students are now taller with four outliers above the box. The lower students did not improve; the whisker is below the box is longer than at the beginning of the semester.

**Figure 6.3.3.1** *Box-plots illustrate the Impact of English Proficiency on Cognitive Strategies of TG (at the end of the semester)*



A closer look at the three boxes reveals that the differences between the three boxes are noticeable. There is some improvements in the median of the high achievers. At the beginning of the semester the median was at 3.50, at end, as the figure above shows it is above 3.75. The medium achievers' box has almost symmetrical median and long whiskers on either side of the box. The comparison the three boxes reveals that the range of scores of the medium achievers is wider as indicated by the length of the whiskers on both sides. To shed more light and to clarify these differences, one way ANOVA has been performed.

It is necessary to test the homogeneity of variance to interpret the ANOVA findings. The following is the test of homogeneity of variances of the cognitive strategies at the beginning and end of the semester.

**Table 6.4.2 Test of Homogeneity of Variances of Cognitive Strategies before and after Treatment**

Test of Homogeneity of Variance				
	Levene Statistic	df 1	df 2	Sig.
Pre-cog	.609	2	67	.54
Post-cog	1.262	2	67	.29

As Table 6.4.2 reveals, Levene Statistic for cognitive strategies of the CG at the beginning of the semester is .609 and the  $p$ -value is .54 and at the end of semester is 1.262 with the corresponding  $p$ -value .29. Both  $p$ -values are greater than  $\alpha$  (.05). Accordingly it is safe to run ANOVA as follows.

**Table 6.4.3 Shows the Mean and SD of Cognitive Strategies used by the CG at the Beginning and End of the Semester**

	N	Mean	SD
Pre-cog 480-500 high	7	3.31	.45
450-479 Medium	53	3.24	.38
430-449 Low	10	3.03	.54
Total	70	3.21	.41
Post-cog 480-500 high	7	3.35	.38
450-479 Medium	53	3.42	.36
430-449 Low	10	3.30	.21
Total	70	3.40	.34

**Table 6.4.4 Illustrates One Way ANOVA for Cognitive Strategies at the Beginning and End of the Semester**

		DF	F	Sig.
Pre-cog	Between Groups	<b>2</b>	1.306	.27
	Within Groups	<b>67</b>		
	Total	<b>69</b>		
Pre-cog	Between Groups	<b>2</b>	.535	.58
	Within Groups	<b>67</b>		
	Total	<b>69</b>		

As illustrated by Tables 6.4.3.and 6.4.4, a one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that there was no significant difference in English proficiency and its effect on the use of cognitive strategies. For example at the beginning of the semester the means and standard deviation for each group were as follow, high group (M = 3.31, SD. = .45); medium group, M =3.24, SD = .38; low, M = 3.21, SD = .41 and at the end of the semester , high, (M = 3.35, SD = .38), medium, M = 3.42, SD = .36; low, M =3.30, SD = .21 and the test statistic (F) equals .609 with a corresponding *p*-value of .54 regarding the pre-cognitive strategies and (F) 1.26 with a corresponding *p*-value of .29. Both of them are larger than *a* (.05). This may indicate that the teaching method has made no change.

**Table 6. 4.5 Test of Homogeneity of Variances of Cognitive Strategies before and after Treatment**

**Test of Homogeneity of Variance**

	Levene Statistic	df 1	df 2	Sig.
<b>Pre-cog</b>	<b>.249</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>.78</b>
<b>Post-cog</b>	<b>.183</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>.83</b>

As Table 6.4.5 reveals, Levene Statistic for cognitive strategies of TG at the beginning of the semester is .249 and the *p*-value is .78 and at the end of semester is .183 with the corresponding *p*-value .83. Both *p*-values are greater than *a* (.05). Accordingly it is safe to run ANOVA as follows.

**Table 6.4.6 Shows the Mean and SD of Cognitive Strategies used by the TG at the Beginning and End of the Semester**

		N	Mean	SD
Pre-cog	480-500 high	11	3.58	.51
	450-479 Medium	43	3.21	.45
	430-449 Low	16	2.91	.44
	Total	70	3.20	.49
Post-cog	480-500 high	11	3.91	.24
	450-479 Medium	43	3.72	.25
	430-449 Low	16	3.75	.26
	Total	70	3.76	.25

**Table 6.4.7 Illustrates One Way ANOVA for Cognitive Strategies at the Beginning and End of the Semester**

		DF	F	Sig.
Pre-cog	Between Groups	<b>2</b>	6.96	.002
	Within Groups	<b>67</b>		
	Total	<b>69</b>		
Post-cog	Between Groups	<b>2</b>	2.42	.096
	Within Groups	<b>67</b>		
	Total	<b>69</b>		

As illustrated by Tables 6.4.6 and 6.4.7, a one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that there was significant difference in English proficiency and its effect on the use of cognitive strategies at the beginning of the semester for the TG. For example at the beginning of the semester the means and standard deviation for each group were as follow, high group (M = 3.58, SD. = .51); medium group, M =3.21, SD = .45; low, M = 2.91, SD = .44 and at the end of the semester , high, (M = 3.91, SD = .24), medium, M = 3.72, SD = .25; low, M =3.75, SD = .26 and the test statistic (F) equals .609 with a corresponding *p*-value of .54 regarding the pre-cognitive strategies and (F) 6.96 with a corresponding *p*-value of .002, which is smaller than  $\alpha$  (.05). At the end of the semester the picture was different to some extent.

The means and SD. Scored by the TG at the end of semester were as follows: The higher achievers scored ( $M = 3.91$ ,  $SD = .24$ ), medium ( $M = 3.72$ ,  $SD = .25$ ) and the low achievers ( $M = 3.75$ ,  $SD = .26$ ). The test statistic ( $F$ ) equals 2.42 with a corresponding  $p$ -value .096 which larger than  $\alpha$  (.05). This may indicate that the teaching method made no change.

As the above omnibus reveals there are some statistical differences found, therefore, in what follows the results of post-hoc comparisons are presented to check which groups have statistical differences.

**Table 6.4.8 Tukey HSD post-hoc**

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable		(I) TOEFL Grade	(J) TOEFL Grade	
Cog-pre	Tukey HSD	480-500 High	450-479 Medium	.05
			430-449 Low	.00
		450-479 Medium	480-500 High	.05
			450-449 Medium	.07
		430-449 Low	480-500 High	.01
			450-479 Medium	.07
Cog-post	Tukey HSD	480-500 High	450-479 Medium	.08
			430-449 Low	.21
		450-479 Medium	480-500 High	.08
			430-449 Low	.95
		430-449 Low	480-500 High	.21
			450-479 Medium	.95

The mean difference is significance at the .05 level.

The Multiple Comparisons table above shows that, for the Tukey HSD post-hoc, there is a statistical difference at the beginning of the semester between the High and Medium achievers at .05 and between High and Low achievers at .00, but there is no significant difference found between low and medium students. At the end of the semester, no statistical significance was found.

### ***Compensation Strategies:***

This section examines the third direct strategies frequently used by students according to the self-perceived questionnaire. The researcher has used the same tools to track how frequently students use them and the impact of teachers' intervention on the way students use them. First a box plot is used to examine the suitability of using the t-test. Then the t-test will be performed to examine the difference of means between the two groups. Then the researcher will investigate the effect of English proficiency, as gauged by TOEFL grades, on the use of cognitive strategies.

***Figure 6.3 Box-plots depict Compensation Strategies (at the beginning of the semester)***

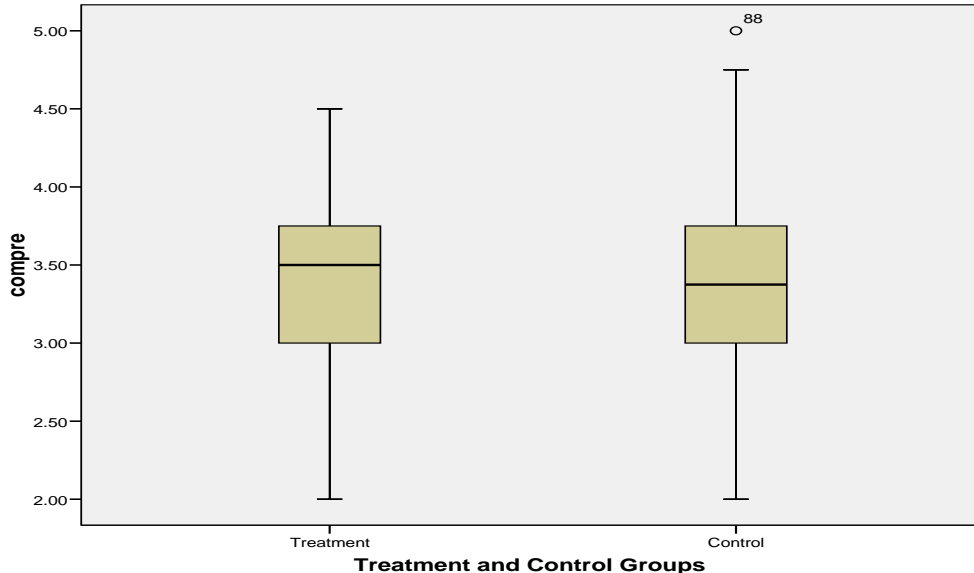
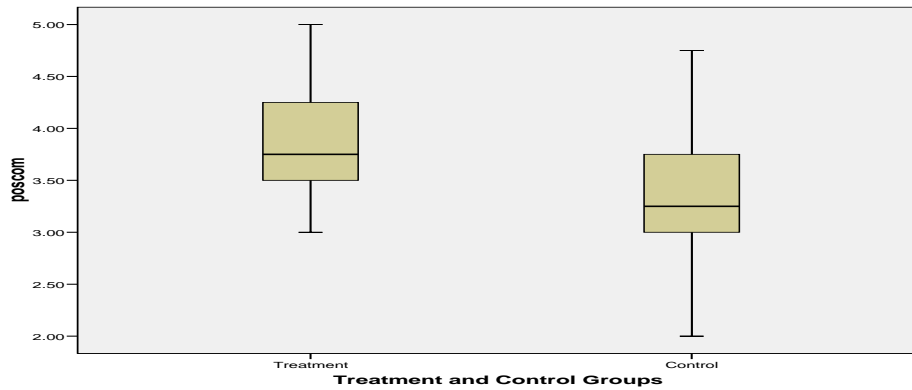


Figure 6.3 illustrates compensation strategies of the two groups before the treatment. It is noticed that the range of the scores of the two groups are wide, both have long whiskers on either side of the box. The TG is skewed since the median is not perfectly centred. The CG has one value as an outlier. The differences between the two boxes are not wide that may distort the group means. The following section displays the means of the two groups after the treatment.

**Figure 6.3.1. Box-plots Illustrate Compensation Strategies (at the end of the semester)**



Visually the two boxes are different. Although the sizes of the two boxes are superficially similar, the distribution of the means among the TG and CG group is obviously asymmetrical. This indicates that the TG possibly was affected by the teaching of learning strategies within sociocultural theory. The whiskers of the TG are between 3.00 and 5.00, while those of the CG are between 2.00 and 4.70.

T-test may clarify this further as will be seen in the following section.

**Table 6.5 depicts Mean and Std. Deviation of Compensation Strategies of the two groups.**

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD
Pre-Cognitive Strategies	Treatment	70	3.20	.49
	Control	70	3.21	.41
Post-Cognitive Strategies	Treatment	70	3.76	.25
	Control	70	3.40	.35

**Table 6.5.1 depicts the independent Samples Test outcome:**

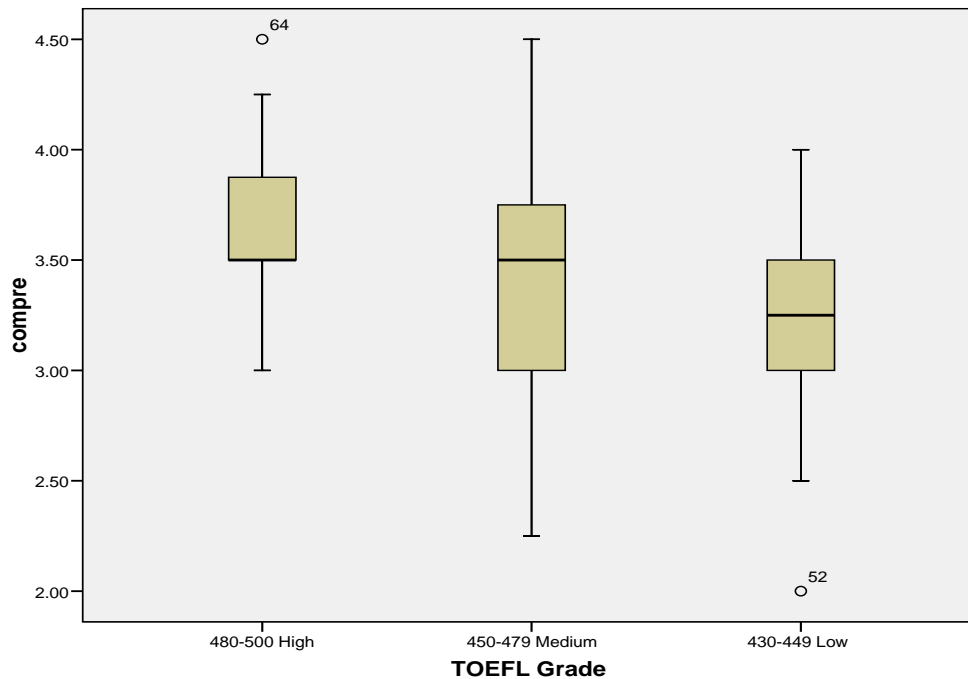
Variable	T	Df	Sig	Eta squared
Pre-Cognitive Strategies	-.539	138	.591	
Post-Cognitive Strategies	5.83	138	.000	0.23

$p \leq .05$



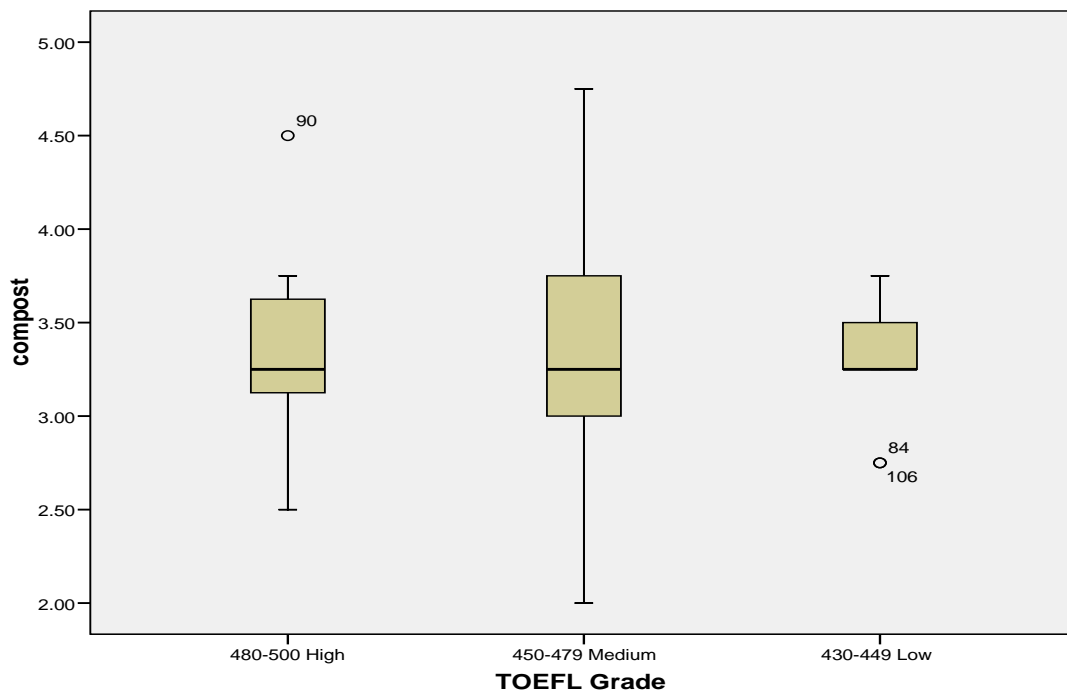
Table 6.5 and Table 6.5.1 illustrate that there was similarity between the two groups at the beginning of the semester. For example, the TG scored ( $M = 3.35$ ,  $SD = .52$ ), and the CG scored ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = .57$ ). There was no statistically significant difference between the two groups before the learning strategies were taught. The sig. (2-tailed) was .591 which was more than the p-value .05. On the other hand, the tables depict statistically significant differences between the two groups after the learning strategies were taught and more able students helped the less able ones operating on their ZPD. For instance, the TG scored ( $M = 3.84$ ,  $SD = .47$ ) and the CG scored ( $M = 3.34$ ,  $SD = .53$ ). There was a significant difference between the two means and the magnitude of the difference in the means according to eta squared was very large (eta squared = 0.23). The sig. (2-tailed) was .000 which was less than the p value .05. This difference can be attributed to the intervention of teachers.

**Figure 6.3.2. Box-plots indicate the Impact of English Proficiency on Compensation Strategies of TG (at the beginning of the semester).**

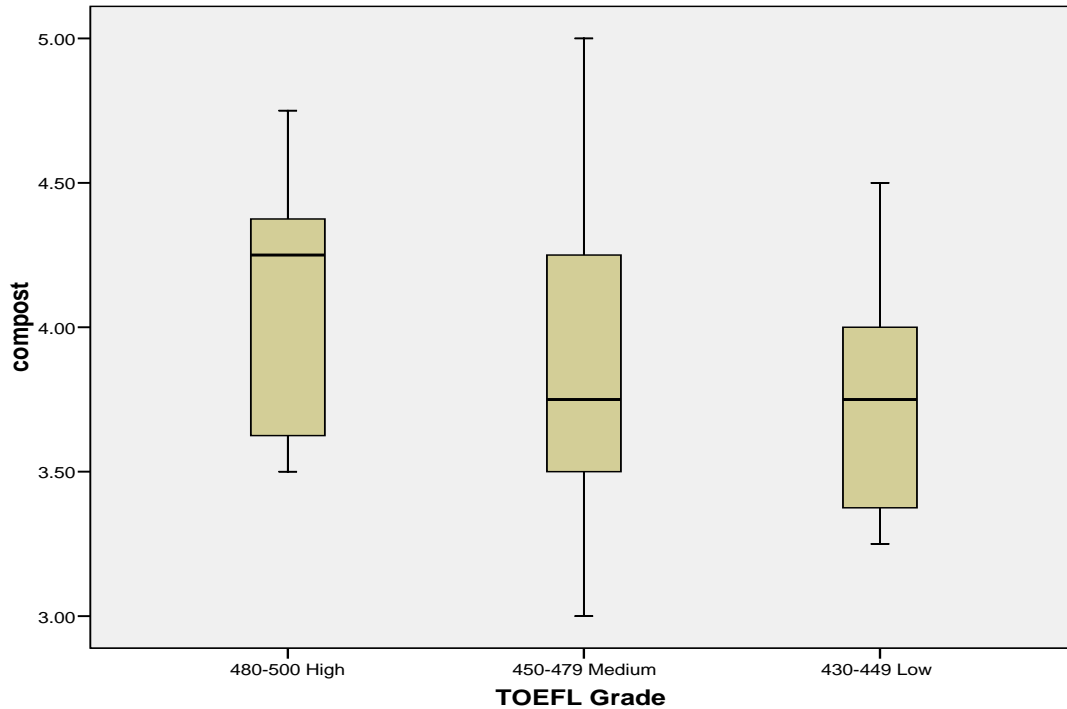


A closer look at the above box-plot reveals there is a difference in the mean distribution across the three TOEFL grades before the treatment. The high grade students head the three groups which negatively skewed with the majority of means scores concentrated near the lower end of the scale, while the lower achievers were at the bottom. The medium achievers box has long whiskers on the either sides of the box which indicates that the range of means score is wide.

***Figure 6.3.3 Box-plots Show the Effect of English Proficiency on Compensation Strategies of CG (at the End of the Semester)***



**Figure 6.3.3.1 Box-plots Show the Effect of English Proficiency on Compensation Strategies of TG (at the End of the Semester)**



There are some slight differences between the TOEFL grades across the three different grades. The medium achievers have the widest range of distribution as the lengths of the whiskers indicate. As will be tackled in the Discussion and Implication section, the difference possible was attributed to the teaching methods and introducing language learning strategies within cognitive and sociocultural theories. . One way ANOVA can cast more light on the effect of English proficiency on the use of learning strategies and on the way students benefit from the teaching methods.

It is necessary to test homogeneity of variance to interpret the ANOVA results. The following is the test of homogeneity of variances of the cognitive strategies at the beginning and end of the semester.

**Table 6.5.2 Test of Homogeneity of Variances of Compensation Strategies of CG before and after Treatment**

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pre-com	1.33	2	67	.26
Post-com	1.32	2	67	.27

As Table 8 reveals, Levene Statistic for compensation strategies of the CG was 1.33 and the  $p$ -value was .26 and at the end of the semester was 1.32 with the corresponding  $p$ -value .27. Both  $p$ -values are much more than  $\alpha$  (.05).

**Table 6.5.3 Shows the Means and SD. of Cognitive strategies employed by the two groups**

		N	Mean	SD
Pre-cog	480-500 high	7	3.67	.73
	450-479 Medium	53	3.42	.56
	430-449 Low	10	3.05	.36
	Total	70	3.40	.57
Post-cog	480-500 high	7	3.39	.62
	450-479 Medium	53	3.34	.55
	430-449 Low	10	3.30	.43
	Total	70	3.34	.53

**Table 6.5.4 Illustrates One Way ANOVA for Compensation Strategies at the Beginning and End of the Semester.**

		DF	F	Sig.
Pre-cog	Between Groups	2	2.89	.062
	Within Groups	67		
	Total	69		
Post-cog	Between Groups	2	.63	.93
	Within Groups	67		
	Total	69		

**Table 6.5.5 Test of Homogeneity of Variances of Compensation Strategies of TG before and after Treatment**

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pre-com	1.33	2	67	.70
Post-com	1.32	2	67	.57

As Table 6.5.5 reveals, Levene Statistic for compensation strategies of the CG was 1.33 and the  $p$ -value was .26 and at the end of the semester was 1.32 with the corresponding  $p$ -value .27. Both  $p$ -values are much more than  $\alpha$  (.05).

**Table 6.5.6 depict the mean and SD of cognitive strategies by the two groups at the end of the semester.**

		N	Mean	SD
Pre-cog	480-500 high	11	3.63	.46
	450-479 Medium	43	3.33	.51
	430-449 Low	16	3.20	.51
	Total	70	3.35	.52
Post-cog	480-500 high	11	4.06	.44
	450-479 Medium	43	3.83	.49
	430-449 Low	16	3.73	.41
	Total	70	3.84	.47

**Table 6.5.7 Illustrates One Way ANOVA for Compensation Strategies at the Beginning and End of the Semester.**

		DF	F	Sig.
Pre-cog	Between Groups	2	2.41	.097
	Within Groups	67		
	Total	69		
Post-cog	Between Groups	2	1.68	.19
	Within Groups	67		
	Total	69		

The means and SD. scored by the TG regarding compensation strategies use according and the impact of English proficiency on them according to ANOVA results, as depicted by Table 9 and 9.1, are as follow , (M =3.63, SD = .64) and at the end of the semester are as follow (M = 4.06, SD =.62 ) for high group and (M = 3.33, SD = .51) at the beginning of the semester and (M = 3.83, SD = .49) for the medium group. For the low group (M = 3.20, SD = .52) at the beginning of the semester and (M =3.73, SD = .41) at the end of the semester. The test statistic (F) equals 2.41 with a corresponding  $p$ -value of .097 regarding the pre-compensation strategies and (F) 1.68 with a corresponding  $p$ -value of .19 which is larger than  $\alpha$  (.05). According to these results, there is no significance difference regarding the effect of English proficiency at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester.

The following section discusses the first indirect strategies reported frequently used by the students as depicted by the self-perceived SILL questionnaire (Appendix A).

**Figure 6.4 Box-plots Indicate Metacognitive Strategies (at the Beginning of the Semester)**

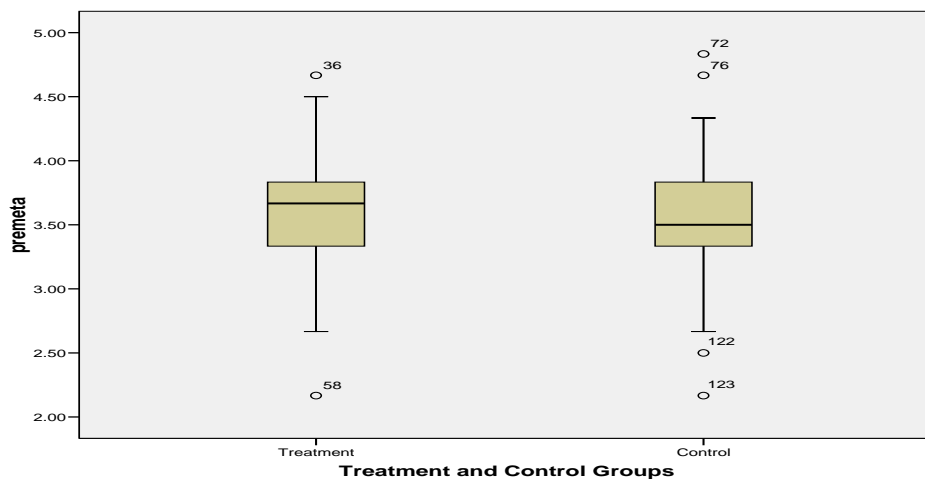
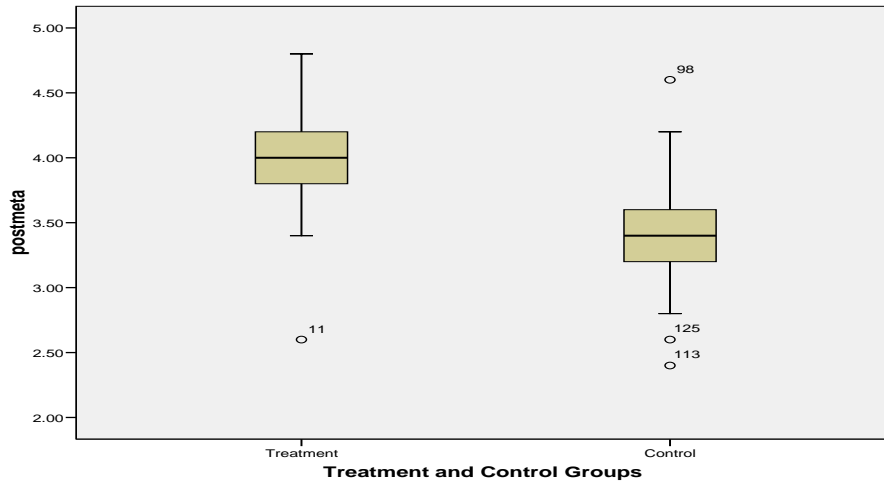


Figure 6.4 illustrates metacognitive strategies of the two groups before teachers' intervention and collaborative work from the more able peers. Both boxes have wide range of scores as indicated by the lengths of the whiskers. However, both of them are skewed since their medians are not perfectly in the centres. The differences between the two boxes are not wide that may distort the group means. While the TG has two outliers,

the CG has four. The following section displays the means of the two groups after the treatment.

**Figure 6.4.1. Box-plots Show Metacognitive Strategies (at the end of the semester)**



The above box-plot displays two different boxes. Although the sizes of the two boxes are similar, the distribution of means among the TG and the CG group is obviously asymmetrical. This may indicate that the TG was affected by introducing of learning strategies within the cognitive and sociocultural theories as hypothesized by this study. and the cooperative work. The whiskers of the TG are between 3.60 and 4.80, while those of the CG are between 2.00 and 4.00. Both groups have outliers. T-test may clarify this difference further as will be seen in the following section. Egypt

**Table 6.6 depicts Mean and Std. Deviation of Metacognitive Strategies of the two groups.**

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD
Pre-Cognitive Strategies	Treatment	70	3.60	.51
	Control	70	3.55	.50
Post-Cognitive Strategies	Treatment	70	3.97	.36
	Control	70	3.37	.38

**Table 6. 6.1 depicts the independent Samples Test outcome:**

Variable	T	Df	Sig	Eta squared
Pre-Cognitive Strategies	.528	138	.598	
Post-Cognitive Strategies	9.5	138	.000	0.23

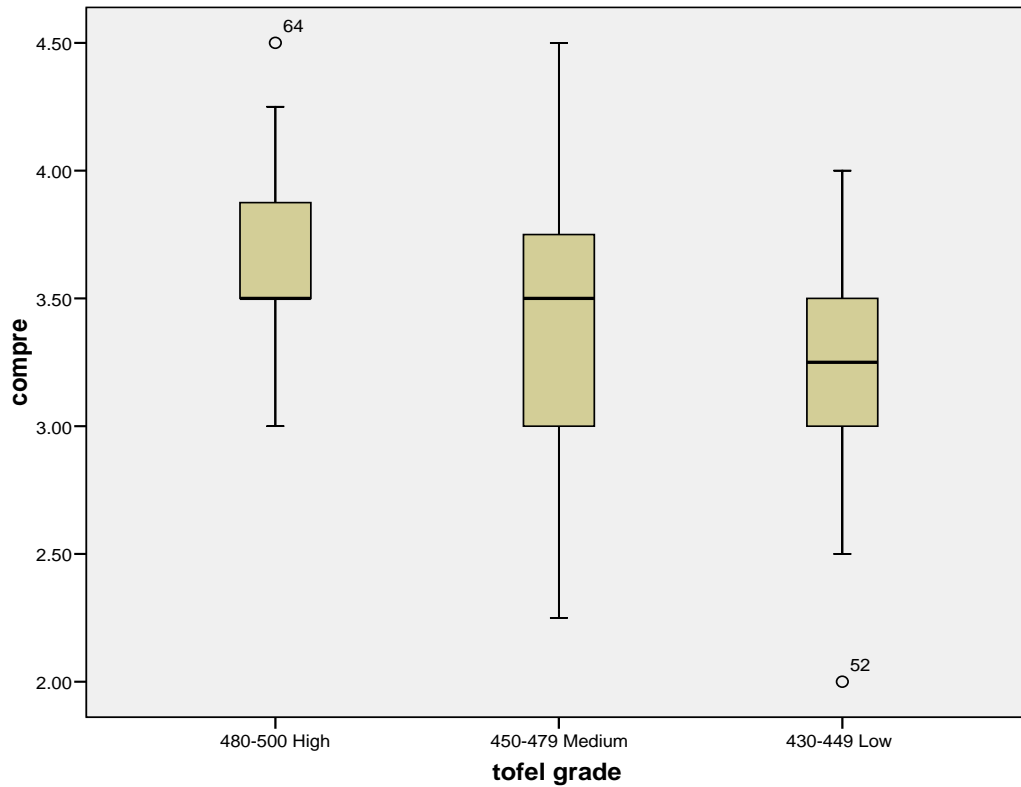
$p \leq .05$

Table 6.6 and Table 6.6.1 illustrate that there was similarity between the two groups at the beginning of the semester regarding learning strategies utility. For example, the TG scored ( $M = 3.60$ ,  $SD = .51$ ), and the CG scored ( $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = .50$ ). There was no statistically significant difference between the two groups before the learning strategies were taught. The sig. (2-tailed) was .528 which was more than the p-value .05. On the other hand, the tables depict statistically significant differences between the two groups after the learning strategies were taught and more able students helped the less able ones operating on their ZPD. For instance, the TG scored ( $M = 3.97$ ,  $SD = .36$ ) and the CG scored ( $M = 3.37$ ,  $SD = .38$ ). There was a significant difference between the two means. The sig. (2-tailed) was .000 which was less than the p value .05. Eta squared showed a very large magnitude of the difference in the means (eta squared = 0.23). This difference can be attributed to the intervention of teachers and cooperative work.

In the following section, the researcher examines the effects of English proficiency on the use of compensation strategies both at the beginning and end of the semester. To be more confident about the results, box-plots and one-way-ANOVA were used. The box-plot is used first to check the suitability of performing one-way ANOVA.



**Figure 6.4.2** *Box-plots Depict the Impact of English Proficiency on Metacognitive Strategies Used by the TG (at the beginning of the semester).*



In looking at the box-plots in Figure 6.4.2, one may notice the range of scores is wide across the three levels of students. A closer look reveals that the higher achievers head the group since their box is positively skewed. The box of the medium achievers has long whiskers on the either side of the box which indicates the wide range of means distribution and the box is negatively skewed. It is noticeable that the box of the lower achievers has its whisker extended to the maximum scores. It is also symmetrical since the median is almost in the middle of the box and the whiskers are equal. This figure also supports that English proficiency has its impact on students' use of LLS.

**Figure 6.4.2.1 Box-plots Depict the Impact of English Proficiency on Metacognitive Strategies Used by the CG (at the beginning of the semester).**

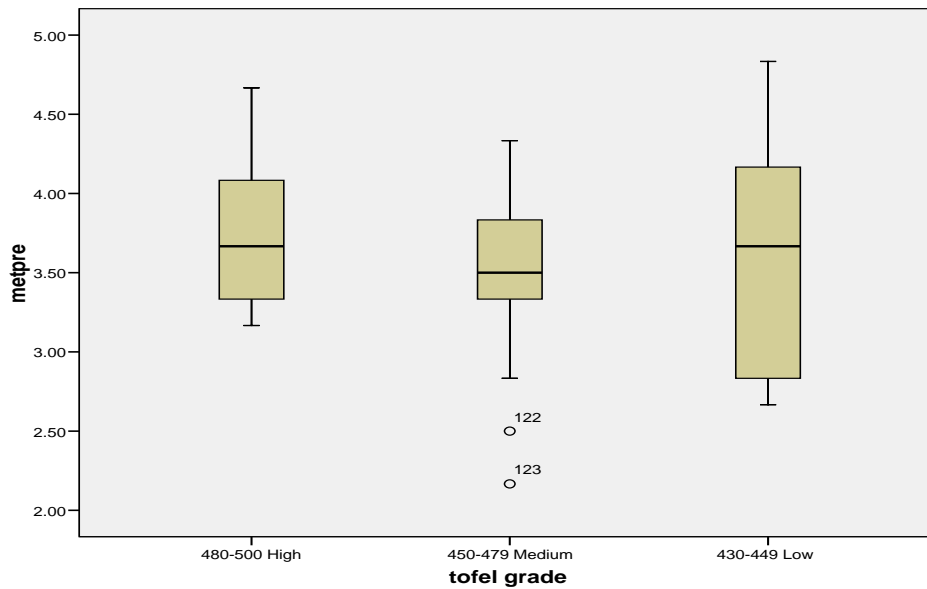
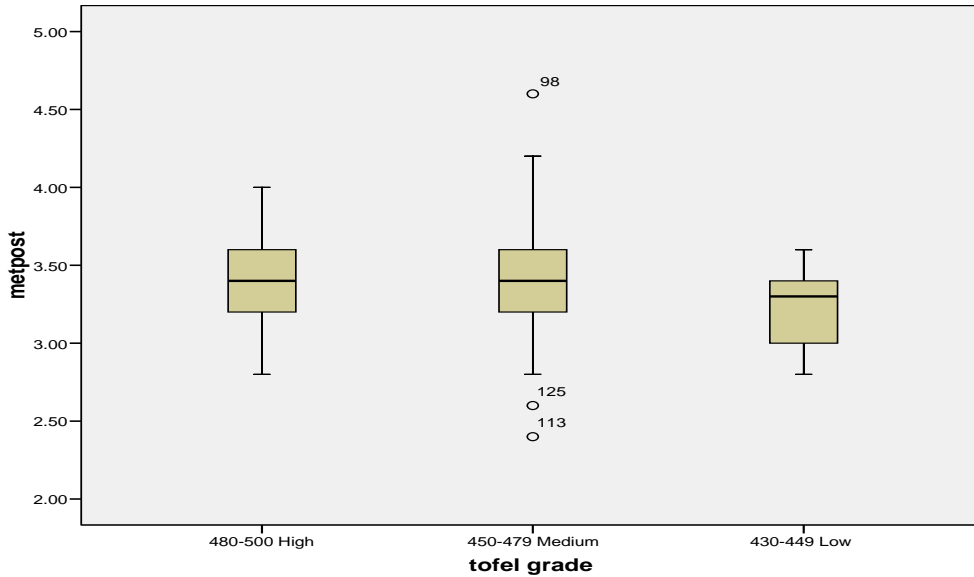


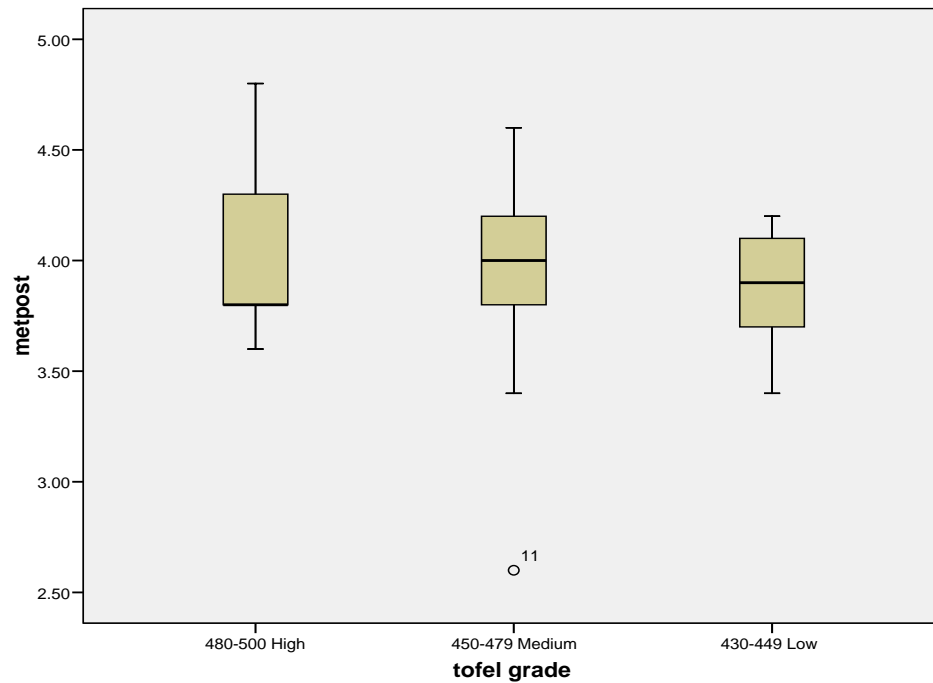
Figure 6.4.2.1 shows that high and medium students use metacognitive strategies more than the low students. The boxes representing them are above the level of the box representing the low students. The low achievers' box has more widely distributed means than the other group. In terms of means the low achievers are the best. Noticeably, the low achievers' box has the longest whiskers which indicates that one of the students there has the highest mean. It is interesting that the medians of the high and low students are equal and both of them are above the median students. The median box has two outliers below the box. In spite of this discrepancy between the three groups, the effect of English proficiency is clear.

**Figure 6.4.3** *Box-plots Illustrate the Effect of English Proficiency on Metacognitive Strategies of the CG (at the End of the semester).*



There are some differences between the TOEFL grades across the three different grades. The box-plots above reveal that the high achievers have normal distribution of scores as indicated by the length of whiskers. Its median is perfectly centred on the whiskers. However, it has two outliers, one above the box and another below the box. The box of the medium achievers is negatively skewed and it has one outlier below the box. It can also be noticed that the lengths of the whiskers of the low achievers are asymmetrical. It is extended to the minimum scores and negatively skewed. As will be tackled in the Discussion and Implication section, the differences may be attributed to the teaching methods and to the introduction of learning strategies within both cognitive and sociocultural theories. One way ANOVA may cast more light on the effect of English proficiency on the use of learning strategies and on the way students benefit from the teaching methods.

**Figure 6.4.3.1** *Box-plots Illustrate the Effect of English Proficiency on Metacognitive Strategies of the TG (at the End of the semester).*



It is necessary to test homogeneity of variance to interpret the ANOVA results. The following is the test of homogeneity of variances of the cognitive strategies at the beginning and end of the semester.

**Table 6.6.2 illustrates Test of Homogeneity of Variances of Metacognitive Strategies at the Beginning and End of the Semester.**

	Levene Statistic	df 1	df2	Sig.
Pre-meta	3.88	2	67	.02
Post-meta	.56	2	67	.569

As Table 10 depicts, Levene Statistic for metacognitive strategies for the CG at the beginning of the semester was 3.88 and the  $p$ -value was .02 and at the end of the semester was .56 with the corresponding  $p$ -value .025.

**6.6.3 Table illustrates the means and SD of metacognitive by the two groups at the beginning of the semester**

	N	Mean	SD
Pre-meta 480-500 high	7	3.76	.65
450-479 Medium	53	3.51	.44
430-449 Low	10	3.61	.74
Total	70	3.55	.55
Post-post 480-500 high	7	3.40	.40
450-479 Medium	53	3.40	.40
430-449 Low	10	2.24	.24
Total	70	3.37	.38

**Table 6.6.4 Illustrates One Way ANOVA for Metacognitive Strategies at the Beginning and End of the Semester.**

	DF	F	Sig.
Pre-meta Between Groups	2	.79	.45
Within Groups	67		
Total	69		
Post-meta Between Groups	2	.73	.48
Within Groups	67		
Total	69		

ANOVA test above indicated that there was no significance difference between the effect of English proficiency and the use of metacognitive strategies across the three groups of learners. For example, high achievers ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = .56$ ) at the beginning of the semester and, medium achievers ( $M = 3.51$ ,  $SD = .44$ ), low achievers ( $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = .50$ ). At the end of the semester, high achievers ( $M = 3.4$ ,  $SD = .40$ ), medium achievers ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = .40$ ) and low achievers ( $M = 2.63$ ,  $SD = .40$ ). Moreover, the test statistic ( $F$ ) equals .797 with a corresponding  $p$ -value of .455 regarding the pre- semester metacognitive strategies and ( $F$ ) .736 with a corresponding  $p$ -value of .48 which is larger than  $\alpha$  (.05). According to these findings, there is no significance difference regarding the effect of English proficiency at the beginning of the semester.

**Table 6.6.5 illustrates Test of Homogeneity of Variances of Metacognitive Strategies employed by the TG at the Beginning and End of the Semester.**

	Levene Statistic	df 1	df2	Sig.
Pre-meta	.299	2	67	.81
Post-meta	.744	2	67	.47

As Table 6.6.5 depicts, Levene Statistic for metacognitive strategies for the TG at the beginning of the semester was .299 and the  $p$ -value was .81 and at the end of the semester was .744 with the corresponding  $p$ -value .47. Both are above the  $\alpha$  value at 5.

**Table 6.6.6 Shows the metacognitive used by the two groups at the end of the semester**

	N	Mean	SD
Pre-meta 480-500 high	11	4.06	.42
450-479 Medium	43	3.55	.50
430-449 Low	16	3.40	.41
Total	70	3.60	.51
Post-post 480-500 high	11	4.05	.39
450-479 Medium	43	3.99	.39
430-449 Low	16	3.88	.25
Total	70	3.97	.36

**Table 6.6.7 Illustrates One Way ANOVA for Metacognitive Strategies at the Beginning and End of the Semester.**

		DF	F	Sig.
Pre-meta	Between Groups	2	6.74	.002
	Within Groups	67		
	Total	69		
Post-meta	Between Groups	2	.76	.47
	Within Groups	67		
	Total	69		

ANOVA test above indicated that there was significance difference between the effect of English proficiency and the use of metacognitive strategies used by the TG across the three groups of learners at the beginning of the semester. For example, high achievers ( $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = .42$ ) at the beginning of the semester and ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = .50$ ) at the end of the semester. The medium achievers ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = .41$ ) at the beginning and ( $M = 3.99$ ,  $SD = .39$ ) at the end. The low achievers ( $M = 3.60$ ,  $SD = .51$ ) at the beginning and ( $M = 3.97$ ,  $SD = .36$ ) at the end of the semester. . Moreover, the test statistic (F) equals 6.74 with a corresponding  $p$ -value of .002 which is smaller than the  $p$ -value at .05 regarding the pre- semester metacognitive strategies and (F) .76 with a corresponding  $p$ -value of .47 which is larger than  $\alpha$  (.05). According to these findings, there was significance difference regarding the effect of English proficiency at the beginning of the semester and no significance difference at the end of the semester after the TG received help from the more able learners and the teacher which will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

What follows is the output, as shown in table, contains the results of post-hoc comparisons.

Table 6.7.8 Tukey HSD

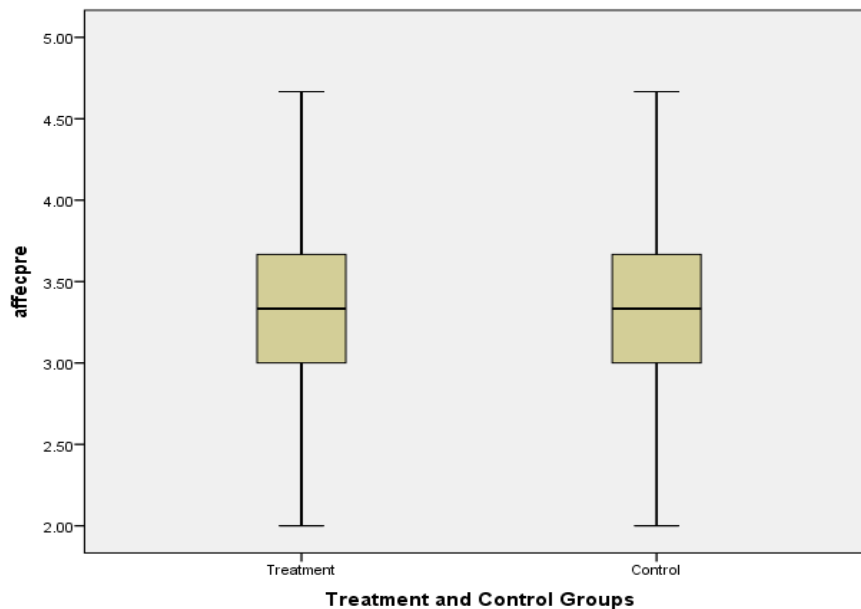
TOEFL grade	TOEFL grade	Sig.
480-500 High	450-479 Medium	.007
	430-449 Low	.002
450-479 Medium	480-500 High	.007
	430-449 Low	.519
430-449 Low	480-500 High	.002
	450-479 Medium	.519

The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The post hoc Tukey test showed statistically significant difference between high level students and medium level ones at p .007. It showed also statistically significant difference between high level students and low level ones at p .002. However, it showed no significant difference between medium and low students (p .519). This will be discussed in detail in Chapter Seven.

The next indirect strategies are affect strategies. Different SPSS tests were conducted to probe the effects of teaching methods and cooperative work operated on students', especially the less able ones' ZPD. The first test is box-plot to test that the assumptions of T-test are met.

**Figure 6. 5. Box-plots Show Affective Strategies (at the beginning of the semester)**





A closer look at figure 6.5 shows that both boxes are symmetrical in terms of the median lines and the lengths of whiskers on either side of the box. This indicates that the two distributions have equal variance in terms of length of the boxes or the interquartile range (IQR). Also the scores that fall between 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile are equal. The t-test results may clarify further the distribution of the means. The next section is about the affective strategies after the treatment.

**Figure 6.5.1 Box-plots Show Affective Strategies (at the end of the semester)**

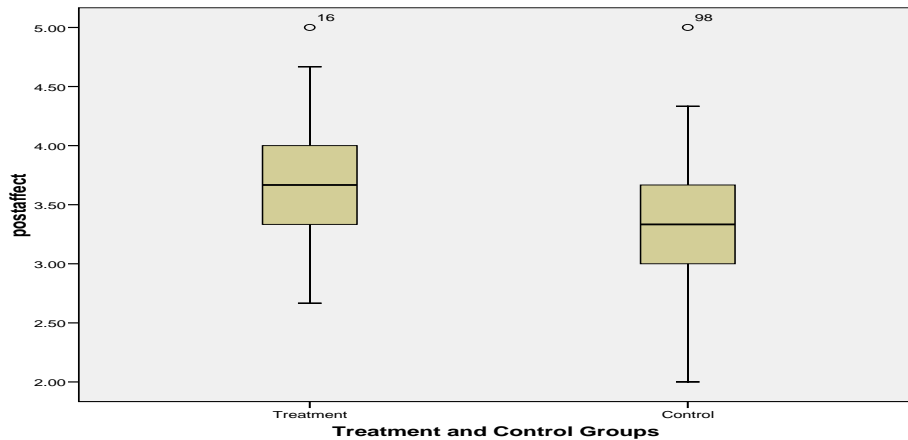


Figure 6.5.1 illustrates asymmetrical boxes with comparable variance or spread. The median lines indicate that the averages are different. Both whiskers have one outlier. The TG box may suggest that this group was affected by the help students received from their teacher and the more able peers, which may support the hypothesis of the study, as will be discussed in Discussion and Implication chapter later. The results of the t-test may clarify any ambiguity of the box-plot above.

**Table 6.7 Depicts Mean and Std. Deviation of Affective Strategies of the two groups.**

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD
Pre-Affective Strategies	Treatment	70	3.38	.58
	Control	70	3.27	.55
Post-Affective Strategies	Treatment	70	3.67	.50
	Control	70	3.32	.56

**Table 6.7.1 depicts the independent Samples Test outcome:**

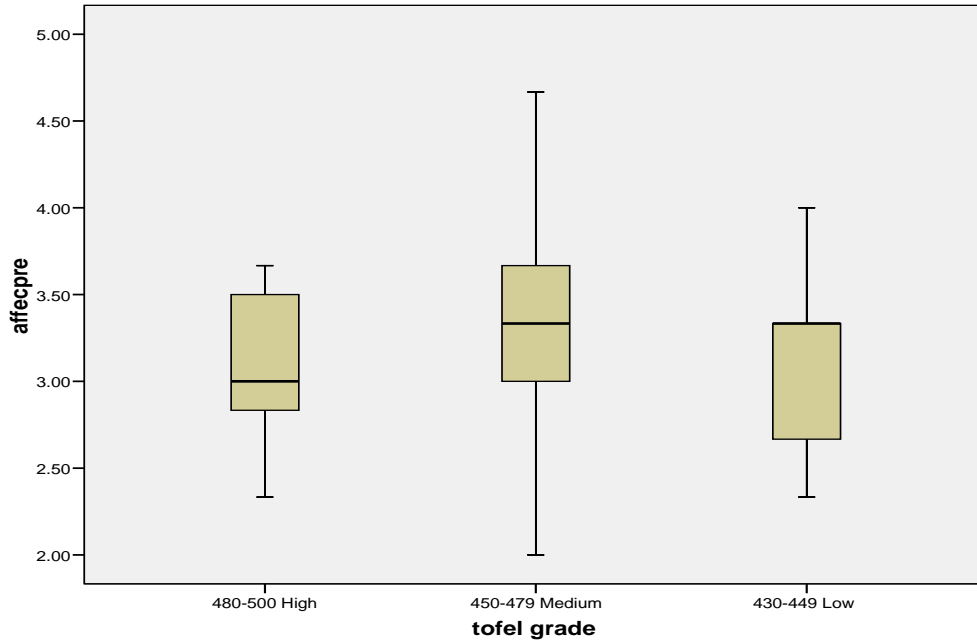
Variable	T	Df	Sig	Eta squared
Pre-Affective Strategies	1.086	138	.279	
Post-Affective Strategies	3.89	138	.000	0.09

$p \leq .05$

A closer look at the Table 6 and Table 6.1 show that the two groups were roughly the same. For example, the TG scored ( $M = 3.38$ ,  $SD = .58$ ), and the CG scored ( $M = 3.27$ ,  $SD = .55$ ). There was no statistically significant difference between the two groups before the learning strategies were taught. The sig. (2-tailed) was .279 which was more than .05. On the other hand, the tables illustrate significant differences between the two groups at the end of the semester, i.e. after teachers' intervention. For instance, the TG scored ( $M. = 3.67$ ,  $SD = .50$ ) and the CG scored ( $M = 3.32$ ,  $SD = .56$ ). There was a significant difference between the two means. The sig. (2-tailed) was .000 which was less than the p value .05 but the magnitude of the difference was moderate (eta squared = .09). This difference can be attributed to the intervention of teachers and help received from the more able students during cooperative work.

In the following section, the researcher examines the effects of English proficiency on the use of memory strategies. To be more confident about the results, box-plots and one-way-ANOVA were used.

**Figure 6.5.2 Box-plots Depict the Impact of English Proficiency on Affective Strategies of CG (at the beginning of the semester).**



The three boxes of the box-plot in Figure 6. 5.2 above illustrate how the median scores of each box are quite different indicating that they use affective strategies differently. This indicates that the medium students and low students use affective strategies more frequently than the high group. The range of means distribution is the widest in the box representing the medium group. Even the slow group seems to be more frequent users than the high group. This fact needs further investigation to see why.

**Figure 6.5.2.1** *Box-plots Depict the Impact of English Proficiency on Affective Strategies of TG (at the beginning of the semester).*

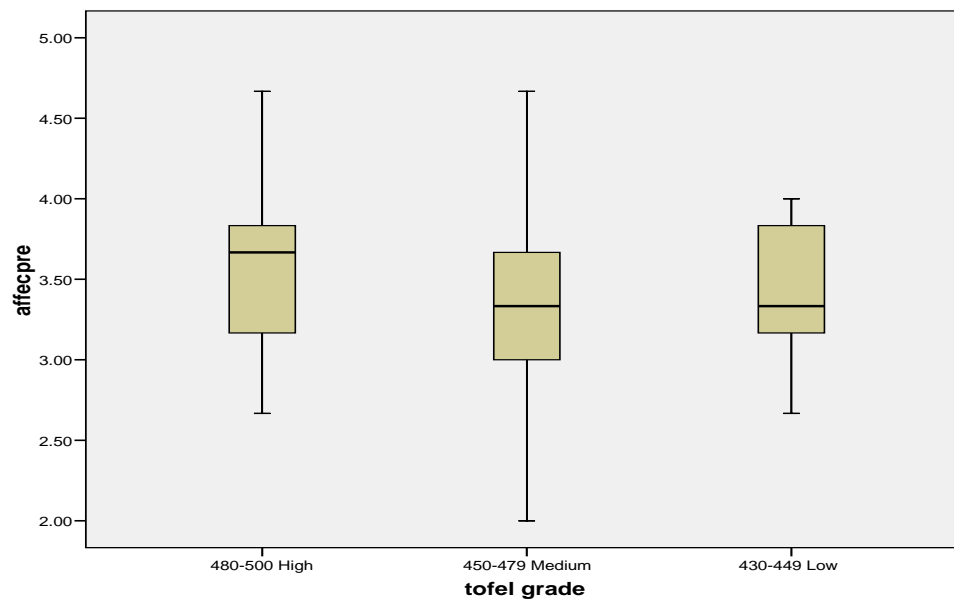


Figure 6.5.2.1 illustrates that the box of the median group has the widest range of means distribution because it has the longest whiskers on both sides of the box. The three boxes have different medians which show that they use these strategies differently.

**Figure 6.5.2. Box-plots Indicate the Effect of English Proficiency on Affective Strategies of the CG (at the end of the semester).**

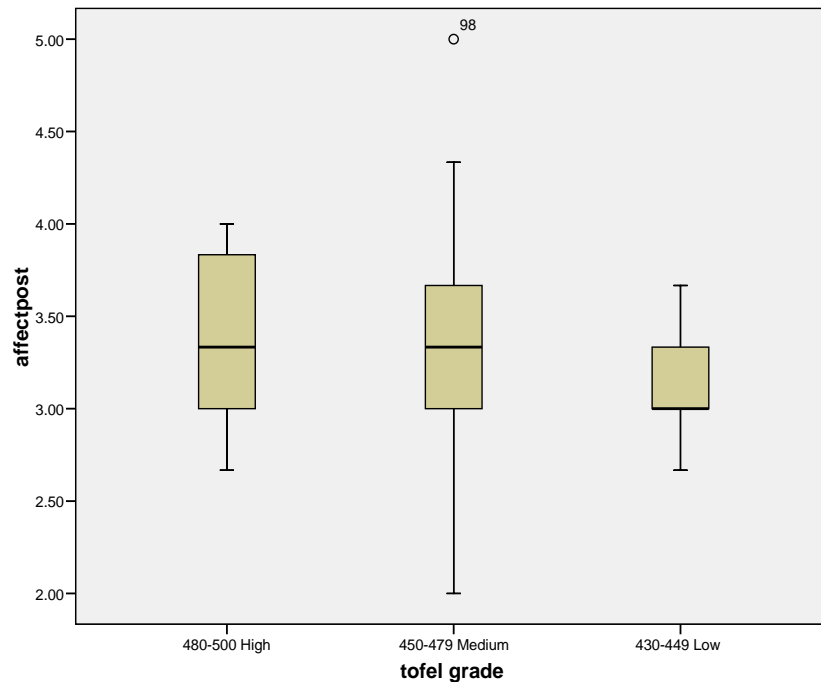


Figure 6. 5.2 shows that, still the medium group heads the groups. A slight difference can be noticed, the high achievers improved a little. One way ANOVA can cast more light on the effect of English proficiency on the use of affective strategies and on the way students benefit from the teaching methods.

**Figure 6.5.2.1 Box-plots Indicate the Effect of English Proficiency on Affective Strategies of the TG (at the end of the semester).**

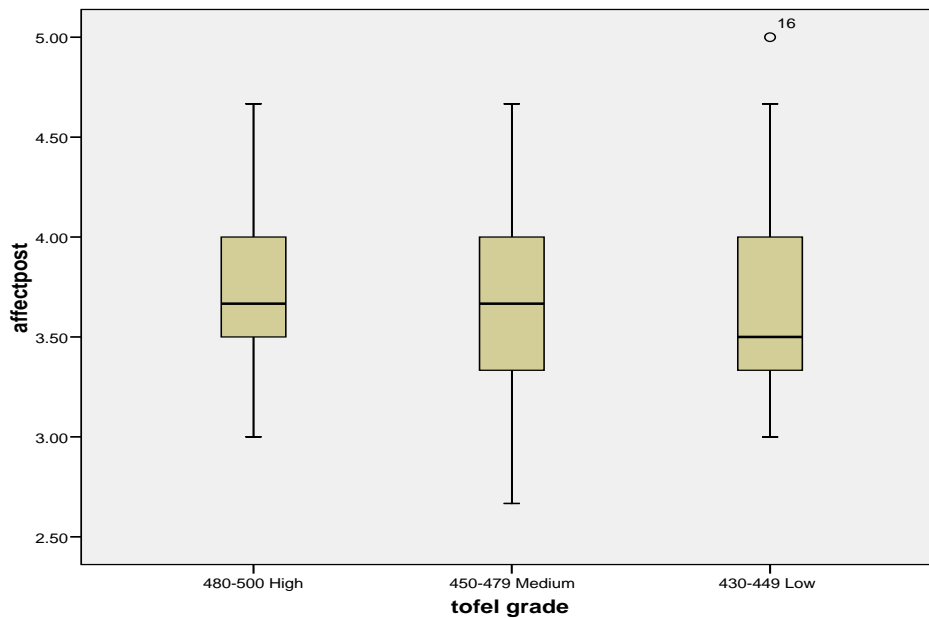


Figure 6.5.2.1 shows some differences in the slow group which may indicate that they have benefited from the teaching of learning strategies and the scaffolding received. This fact may support the hypothesis that when learning strategies instruction introduced within social and cognitive contexts can be more effective.

**Table 6.7.2 Shows the means and SD of affective strategies by the TG groups at the beginning of the semester.**

	N	Mean	SD
Pre-Affective 480-500 high	7	3.09	.49
450-479 Medium	53	3.32	.57
430-449 Low	10	3.13	.47
Total	70	3.27	.55
Post-affective 480-500 high	7	3.38	.52
450-479 Medium	53	3.35	.60
430-449 Low	10	3.13	.28
Total	70	3.32	.56

**Table 6.7.3 shows the metacognitive used by the CG**

	DF	F	Sig.
Pre-meta Between Groups	2	.911	.40
Within Groups	67		
Total	69		
Post-meta Between Groups	2	.665	.51
Within Groups	67		
Total	69		

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that there were different distributions of means among CG students' affective strategies and their English proficiency levels at the beginning of the semester. For example, high graders (M = 3.09, SD = .49), medium graders (M = 3.32, SD = .57) and low graders (M = 3.27, SD = .55). At the end of the semester a small change occurred, that is to say the high grade students' means and SD were (M = 3.38, SD .52), medium students' mean and standard deviations (M = 3.35, SD .60) Low students' mean and SD (M = 3.32, SD = .56). Moreover, the test statistic (F) equals .911 with a corresponding *p*-value of .40 regarding the pre- semester affective strategies and (F) .665 with a corresponding *p*-value of .51 which is larger than

$\alpha$  (.05). According to these results, there was no significance difference regarding the effect of English proficiency at the beginning and end of the semester.

It is necessary to test homogeneity of variance to interpret the ANOVA results. The following is the test of homogeneity of variances of the affective strategies at the beginning and end of the semester.

**Table 6.7.4 Illustrates Test of Homogeneity of Variances**

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pre-affective	.088	2	67	.91
Post-affective	2.25	2	67	.11

As Table 6.7.4 depicts, Levene Statistic for affective strategies at the beginning of the semester was .088 and the  $p$ -value was .91 and at the end was .225 with the corresponding  $p$ -value .11. Both  $p$ -values are much more than  $\alpha$  (.05). Accordingly it is safe to perform ANOVA as follows

ANOVA test above indicated that there was no significance difference between the English proficiency and the use of affective strategies employed by the CG across the groups in the following manner, high graders ( $M = 3.09$ ,  $SD .49$ ) at the beginning of the semester and ( $M = 3.38$ ,  $SD = .52$ ), medium graders ( $M = 3.32$ ,  $SD = .57$ ) and low graders ( $M = 3.27$ ,  $SD = .55$ ). A small change occurred at the end of the semester, the means and SD scores were as follow: high graders ( $M = 3.38$ ,  $SD = .52$ ), medium students ( $M = 3.35$ ,  $SD = .60$ ) and low achievers ( $M = 3.32$ ,  $SD = .56$ ). A closer look to the ANOVA results above reveals that there was no statistical significance between the beginning and the end of the term.

Regarding the TG, the next section presents the ANOVA results.

**Table 6.7.5 Test of Homogeneity of Variance**

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pre-affective	.767	2	67	.468
Post-affective	.734	2	67	.484

As Table 6.7.5 depicts, Levene Statistic for affective strategies at the beginning of the semester was .76 and the  $p$ -value was .46 and at the end was .74 with the



corresponding  $p$ -value .48. Both  $p$ -values are much more than  $\alpha$  (.05). Accordingly it is safe to perform ANOVA as follows

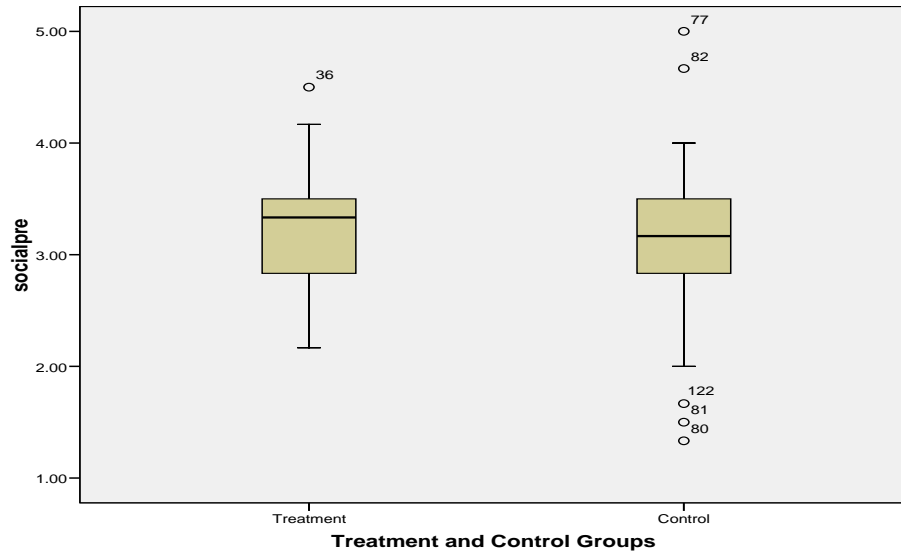
**Table 6.7.6 ANOVA by the TG**

	df	F	Sig.
Pre-affective Between the Groups	2	.657	.522
Within the Groups	67		
Total	69		
Post-affective Between the Groups	2	.785	.460
Within the Groups	67		
Total	69		

ANOVA test above indicated that there was no significance difference between the English proficiency and the use of affective strategies employed by the TG across the groups in the following manner, high graders scored ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD .63$ ) at the beginning of the semester and ( $M = 3.81$ ,  $SD = .52$ ) at the end of the semester. The medium graders scored ( $M = 3.32$ ,  $SD = .61$ ) at the beginning and scored ( $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = .46$ ) after receiving help from teachers and more able students. The low graders scored ( $3.41$ ,  $SD = .44$ ) when they started the semester and scored ( $M = 3.72$ ,  $SD = .58$ ) after they received help and scaffolding. . A small change occurred at the end of the semester. However, a closer look at the ANOVA results above reveals that there was no statistical significance between the beginning and the end of the term. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter Seven.

The next and last indirect strategies to probe are the social strategies. Different SPSS tools were used to investigate the effect of teaching methods on the way students use these strategies.

**Figure 6.6. Box-plots Show Social Strategies (at the beginning of the semester)**



A closer look at figure 6.6 shows that both boxes are asymmetrical in terms of the median lines and the lengths of whiskers on either side of the box. The box on the left which represents the TG has some positively skewed distribution while the one on the right, which represent the CG, has normal distribution. Moreover, the box representing the CG has a few outliers while the TG box has only one outlier. However, the boxes have almost equal sizes which indicate that they have equal variances. The lengths of the whiskers, which indicate the range of the data, in the two boxes are almost the same. Therefore, it appears there was no difference between the two groups at the beginning of the semester. The t-test results may clarify further the distribution of the means.

**Figure 6.6.1 shows the box plots of Social Strategies (at the end of the semester)**

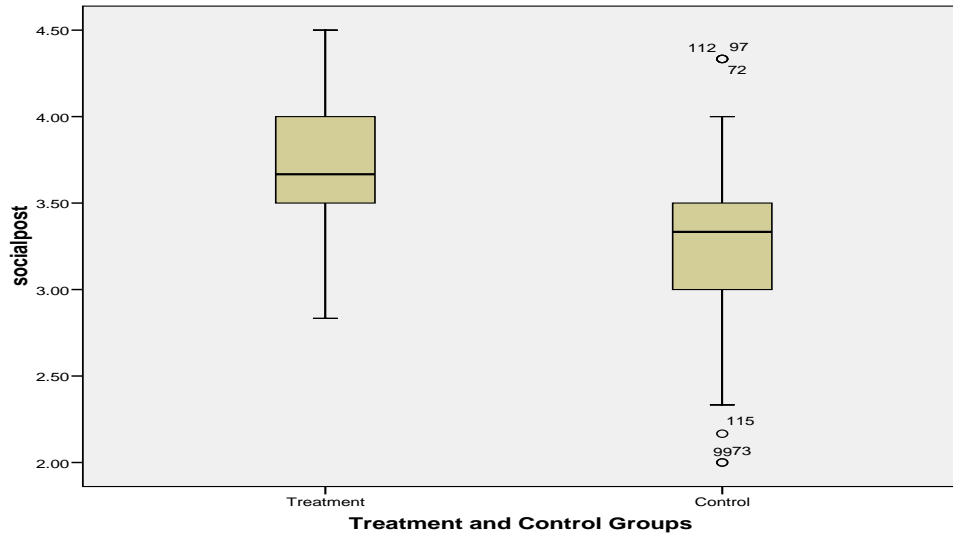


Figure 6.6.1 illustrates asymmetrical boxes with comparable variance or spread. The median lines indicate that the averages are different. The TG is positively skewed, with the majority of scores towards the upper end of the scale, while the CG box is negatively skewed with the majority of scores concentrated towards the lower end of the scale. The whiskers of the CG have outliers at both sides. The TG box may suggest that this group was affected by the help students received from their teacher and the more able peers as will be discussed in Discussion and Implication Chapter later. The results of the t-test may clarify any ambiguity of the box-plot above.

**Table 6.7 Mean and SD Social Strategies of the Two Groups**

*Group Statistics*

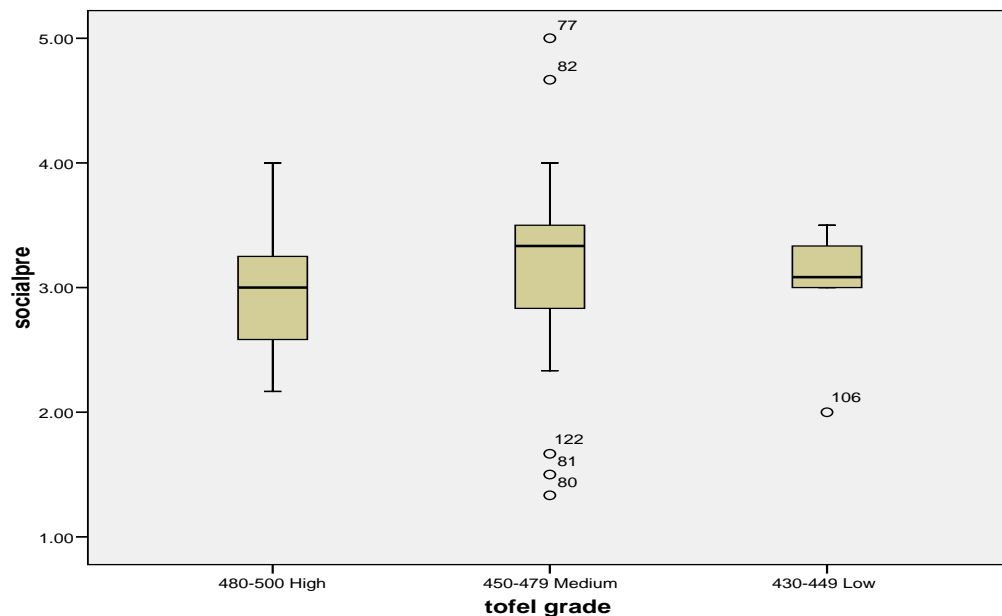
Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD
Pre-Social Strategies	Treatment	70	3.22	.51
	Control	70	3.15	.60
Post-Social Strategies	Treatment	70	3.72	.34
	Control	70	3.27	.46

$p \leq .05$

**Table 6.7.1 Results of the Independent-Sample Test (Social Strategies)**

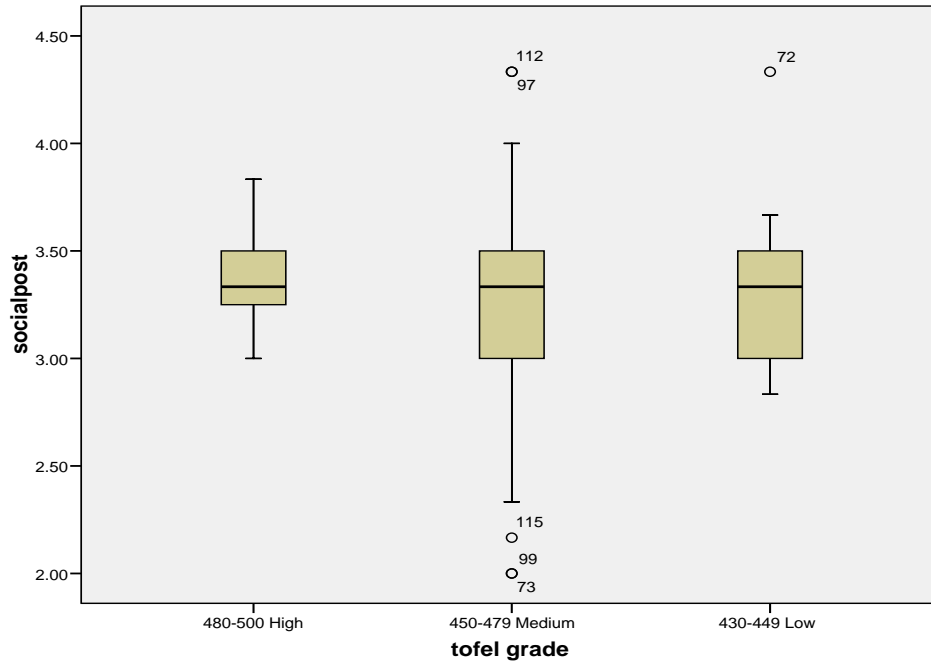
Variable	T	Df	Sig (2-tailed)	Eta squared
Pre-Affective Strategies	.747	138	.456	.004
Post-Affective Strategies	6.51	138	.000	0.3

**Figure 6.6.2. Box plots Depict the Relation between English Proficiency and Social Strategies used by the CG (at the beginning of the semester)**



The three boxes in Figure 6.6.2 above illustrate that the students who scored different grades were different in the way they used social strategies. The low grade students seem to have the lowest means and it skewed and had one outlier below the box. The medium grade group has the highest median and better performance and it has outliers above and below the box. The high grade group seem to use social strategies less frequently than the medium grade group. This could be clarified by ANOVA test.

**Figure 6.6.3. Box plots Depict the Relation between English Proficiency and Social Strategies of CG (at the end of the semester)**



There are some slight differences between the TOEFL grades across the three different grades as indicated by Box-plots. It could be seen that the means of the low achievers improved at the end of the semester and there are no outliers. One way ANOVA can cast more light on the effect of English proficiency on the use of learning strategies and on the way students benefit from the teaching methods.

**Figure 6.6.3.1 Box plots Depict the Relation between English Proficiency and Social Strategies of CG (at the end of the semester)**

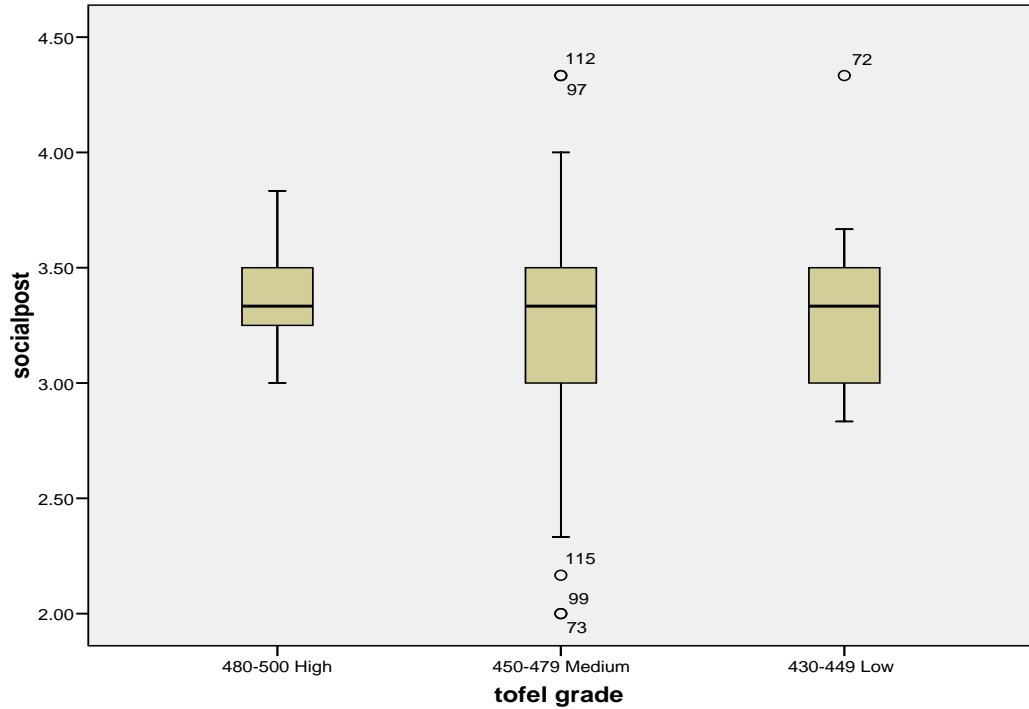


Figure 6.6.3.1 shows the boxplots of social strategies used by the CG at the end of the semester, it can be noticed that some changes took place. Both medium and slow groups have improved in terms of their utility of social strategies although these subjects were not taught LLS explicitly. ANOVA test may clarify more whether this difference is significant or not.

**Figure 6.6.3.2 Box plots Depict the Relation between English Proficiency and Social Strategies of TG (at the end of the semester)**

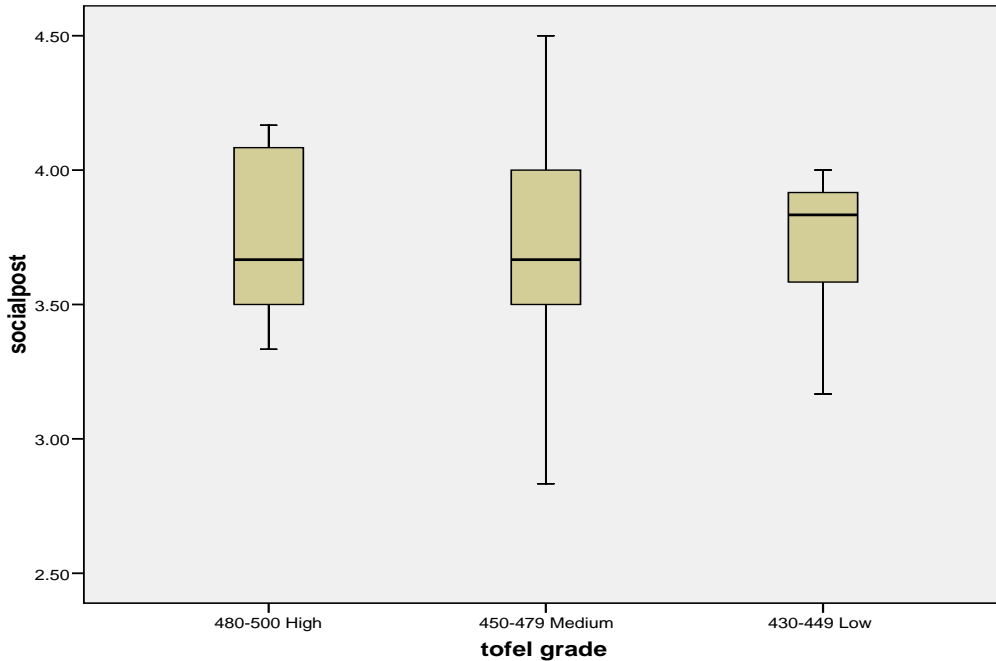


Figure 6.6.3.2 illustrates the boxplots of social strategies by the TG at the end of the semester. The first thing to be noticed is that the box of the high grade group is now bigger, which indicates that the majority of the means are within the interquartile range (IQR), with short whiskers on both sides. The medium grade students almost remained the same with a slight movement of the median towards the bottom. The size of the slow grade box remained the same with some changes in the length of the whiskers and the median. Performing ANOVA may cast light on these differences, whether they are within the group or between the group and whether there is any statistical significance or not. Table illustrates One-Way ANOVA for Social Strategies employed by CT at the beginning and the end of the semester (the mean and SD)

It is necessary to test homogeneity of variance to interpret the ANOVA results. The following is the test of homogeneity of variances of the cognitive strategies at the beginning and end of the semester.

**Table 6.7.2 illustrates Test of Homogeneity of Variances of Social Strategies employed by the CG at the Beginning and End of the Semester.**

	Levene Statistic	df 1	df2	Sig.
Pre-social	.753	2	67	.47
Post-social	.932	2	67	.39

As Table 10 depicts, Levene Statistic for social strategies for the CG at the beginning of the semester was .753 and the *p*-value was .47 and at the end of the semester was .932 with the corresponding *p*-value .39

**Table 6.7.3 shows the means and SD of social strategies used by the TG**

	N	Mean	SD
Pre-social 480-500 high	7	2.97	.61
450-479 Medium	53	3.19	.63
430-449 Low	10	3.06	.42
Total	70	3.15	.60
Post-social 480-500 high	7	3.38	.26
450-479 Medium	53	3.24	.49
430-449 Low	10	3.35	.44
Total	70	3.27	.46

**Table 6.7.4 Illustrates One Way ANOVA for Social Strategies employed by the CG at the Beginning and the End of the Semester.**

	DF	F	Sig.
Pre-meta Between Groups	2	.53	.58
Within Groups	67		
Total	69		
Post-meta Between Groups	2	.42	.65
Within Groups	67		
Total	69		



ANOVA test above indicated that there was no significance difference between the effect of English proficiency and the use of social strategies across the three groups of learners. For example, high achievers ( $M = 2.97$ ,  $SD = .61$ ) at the beginning of the semester and, medium achievers ( $M = 3.19$ ,  $SD = .63$ ), low achievers ( $M = 3.15$ ,  $SD = .60$ ). At the end of the semester, high achievers ( $M = 3.38$ ,  $SD = .26$ , medium achievers ( $M = 3.24$ ,  $SD = .49$ ) and low achievers ( $M = 3.35$ ,  $SD = .44$ ). Moreover, the test statistic ( $F$ ) equals .53 with a corresponding  $p$ -value of .58 regarding the pre- semester metacognitive strategies and ( $F$ ) .42 with a corresponding  $p$ -value of .65 which is larger than  $\alpha$  (.05). According to these findings, there is no significance difference regarding the effect of English proficiency between the beginning and the end of the semester.

**Table 6.7.5 Output from One-Way ANOVA: Description of social strategies employed by TG at the beginning and end of the semester.**

Description		N	Mean	SD
Pre-social	480-500 high	11	3.25	.64
	450-479 Medium	43	3.23	.52
	430-449 Low	16	3.19	.44
	Total	70	3.22	.51
Post-social	480-500 high	11	3.77	.30
	450-479 Medium	43	3.72	.38
	430-449 Low	16	3.70	.28
	Total	70	3.72	.34

**Table 6.7.6 Illustrates One Way ANOVA for Social Strategies employed by the CG at the Beginning and the End of the Semester.**

		DF	F	Sig.
Pre-social	Between Groups	2	.53	.58
	Within Groups	67		
	Total	69		
Post-social	Between Groups	2	.42	.65
	Within Groups	67		
	Total	69		

ANOVA test above indicated that there was no significance difference between the effect of English proficiency and the use of social strategies utilized by the TG across the three groups of learners. For example, high achievers scored ( $M = 3.25$ ,  $SD = .64$ ) at the beginning of the semester and, medium achievers ( $M = 3.23$ ,  $SD = .52$ ), low achievers ( $M = 3.19$ ,  $SD = .44$ ). At the end of the semester, high achievers ( $M = 3.77$ ,  $SD = .30$ ), medium achievers ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SD = .38$ ) and low achievers ( $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = .28$ ). Moreover, the test statistic ( $F$ ) equals .045 with a corresponding  $p$ -value of .95 regarding the pre- semester metacognitive strategies and ( $F$ ) .121 with a corresponding  $p$ -value of .88 which is larger than  $\alpha$  (.05). According to these findings, there is no significance difference regarding the effect of English proficiency between the beginning and the end of the semester.

#### ***6.4 Questionnaires and Interviews:***

This section presents the analysis and discussions yielded from the questionnaires and interviews of the teachers at The Department of Foreign Languages, English Section at the University of Nizwa. The teachers are specialized in different areas, i.e. Literature, Theoretical and Applied Linguistics and Translation. They belong to different nationalities; they are native English speakers from UK, New Zealand and USA. The non-native speakers are from the Arab World (Jordan, Sudan and Syria), Asia (Bangladesh, India) and Eastern Europe (Ukraine). The Department of Foreign Languages is a part of the College of Arts and Sciences, which is the largest college at the university, approximately 1000 full time students are enrolled at these colleges, the majority of whom are females. The other colleges are Engineering, Pharmacy, Nursing, Education and Business Administration. The medium of instruction at all of these colleges is English.

The English language teachers who participated in the current study teach General English and Communication Skills to all the students of these colleges and specialized English courses, e.g. Introduction to Linguistics, Semantics, Discourse Analysis, Second Language Acquisition, British and American Literature to mention but a few. In what follows, the researcher presents the perceptions of the teachers who teach English at the university of the teaching methods and students' language learning strategies.

#### **6.4.1 The Questionnaire**

The purpose of this section is to discuss the data collected from the questionnaire, which will give insight into the teachers' perceptions of the learning strategies employed by the students at the University of Nizwa. The questionnaire distributed to the group of teachers at the university (15 out of 17) aimed to collect attitudinal data (Dornyei (2002:5). The teachers who participated in the study were aware of the importance of the questionnaire and the data it would yield, perhaps thereby overcoming the limitations of the questionnaire mentioned by Dornyei (2002:7), limitations such as that people not being particularly thorough with regards to research, the possible illiteracy of some of the respondents, or the lack of truthfulness and accuracy of the information provided by participants.

The questionnaire asked the participants to rank in their professional opinion the learning strategies employed by the students. They were asked to do so using a scale of one to six (six being the most frequently used and one the least frequently used strategy). The researcher used Oxford's (1990) definition of learning strategy and her classification, stating them clearly on the questionnaire paper. The questionnaires were collected without any missing paper and yielded the following data.

***Table 6.8 depicts teachers' ranking of learning strategies employed by students.***

##### **Descriptive Statistics**

Learning Strategies	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Memory	4.73	1.9	1
Cognitive	3.86	1.6	3
Metacognitive	2.40	1.3	6
Compensation	3.06	1.2	4
Affective	2.60	1.5	5
Social	3.93	.9	2

Closer scrutiny of the Table 6.8 reveals a small difference between students' perceptions and the teachers'. For example, the memory strategies were ranked the second by the T G before and after treatment and rated the first and second most

frequently used strategy by the CG at the beginning and at end of the semester. Teachers rank it as the most frequently used. However, there is a big difference in their perception of the social strategy. While both groups rank them as number five and six, teachers rank them as number 2. TG rank cognitive strategy as number six before treatment and number 4 after treatment. For CT they were number 5 at the beginning of the semester and as number 1 at the end. Teachers rank these strategies as number 3. All the teachers and students rank compensation and affective strategies almost similarly. The big difference was in metacognitive strategies, with students ranking them highly and teachers ranking them at the bottom.

## ***6.5. Qualitative Data Analysis***

### ***6.5.1. Introduction:***

In the previous sections, the researcher categorized and quantified the learning strategies employed by the participants of the study; this section aims at describing the participants' own experiences in their own words. As pointed out by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003:23), "the best way to learn about people's subjective experience is to ask about it, and then listen carefully to what they say." Therefore, the focus of this section is the insights developed as a result of the analysis applied to the data collected through interviews and students' diaries in order to triangulate the quantitative data obtained from the SILL questionnaire mentioned earlier.

Qualitative data are dissimilar to quantitative data since they are made up of words and observations. They require in-depth analysis and interpretation to understand them. To interpret and make sense of what these students wrote in their diaries or talked about during the interview, the researcher followed a rigorous scientific method by employing a Grounded Theory approach in order to generate theories that will support the rich diverse data collected in the field. The Grounded Theory approach principally linked with the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967). According to Denscombe (2010), it is an approach which is dedicated to generating theories rather than testing theories. Therefore, it can be considered as a bottom-up strategy since it enables researchers to develop perspectives and insights that often remain hidden, when relying on other approaches. Quantitative approaches enable the research to delve behind initial understanding and provide opportunities for constant validity checks.

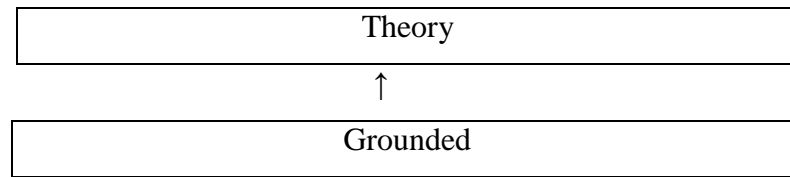
### ***6.5.2. Grounded Theory as a Method of Analysis for the Qualitative Data***

According Denscombe (2010:272-273) there is no single approach to the way qualitative data are analyzed that may cover all situations, however, there are some common principles that are linked with these types of data. These are:

- Iterative: The analysis does not take place at a single point, but rather it becomes an evolving process where the data collection and data analysis stages occur concurrently.
- Inductive: The analysis moves from the particular to the general in order to arrive at more abstract and generalized conclusions about the topic.
- Researcher-centred: The researcher's values and experiences may influence the analysis. That is to say his/her identity is considered to be significant as far as the analysis is concerned.

According to the same author, qualitative data take the form of words, whether spoken or written, besides visual images. These are linked basically with strategies of research such as case study, grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology and with the research tools like interviews, documents and observations. In this study, the grounded theory is used as a research strategy to analyze the interview and students' diaries in order "to derive concepts and theories that capture the meaning contained within the data", Denscombe (2010:283).

Charmaz (2006:9) views grounded theory as a group of principles and practices rather than as prescriptions or readymade packages. She also claims that the focus of the Grounded Theory is on the discovery of the theory development, not on the logical deductive reasoning. In her opinion the latter relies on prior theoretical frameworks. Here she echoes Glaser and Strauss (1967) who contrast grounded theory with "logico-deductive theory". The researcher adopted the grounded theory in the sense perceived by Charmaz (2006). In other words, to view grounded theory as a set of principles and practices in order to discover the theories that remain hidden in the data collected. Charmaz (2006) suggests a constructivist version of grounded theory that considers the researcher as an active agent who involves in constructing his/her own knowledge from the data he/she collected and analyzed.



***Figure 6.7. Depicts that grounded theory is a bottom-up approach.***

### **6.5.3. Coding in Grounded theory**

Coding is the first step to be taken by a researcher employing the grounded theory. Different authors propose a variety of techniques for coding data and have defined the types of coding accordingly in different manners. For example, Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest a set of techniques for enhancing while coding. Charmaz (2006) claims that the grounded theory coding is the most important part of the analysis and it is more than a mere beginning because it paves the way of the analytic framework from which the researcher builds their analysis. She outlines a number of analytic stages ranging from initial coding that involves naming each word, line or segment of the data collected, this is followed by focused coding which is a selective phase that utilizes the most important initial codes “to sort, synthesize, integrate and organize large amount of data.” There is a third type of coding presented by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as pointed out by Charmaz (2006), axial coding. This coding postulates the characteristics and dimension of a category and relates it to subcategory. Strauss (1987) cited in Charmaz (2006) views axial coding as “a dense texture of relationships around the ‘axis’ of a category.”

In what follows, the three stages will be explained based on Strauss (1987).

### **6.5.5. Open Coding**

According to Strauss (1987), during the open coding process, the researcher notes and labels categories and subcategories and may suggest a few connections among them. As suggested by Strauss (1987:63), the researcher should remain bound within the sphere of the data, but s/he needs to postulate and hypothesize about data, and phenomena.

#### **6.5.6. Axial Coding**

This is the second phase in coding. At this stage, coding should be more intensive and the researcher starts to "build up a dense texture of relationships around the 'axis' of the category being focused upon," (Strauss, 1987:64).

#### **6.5.7. Selecting Coding**

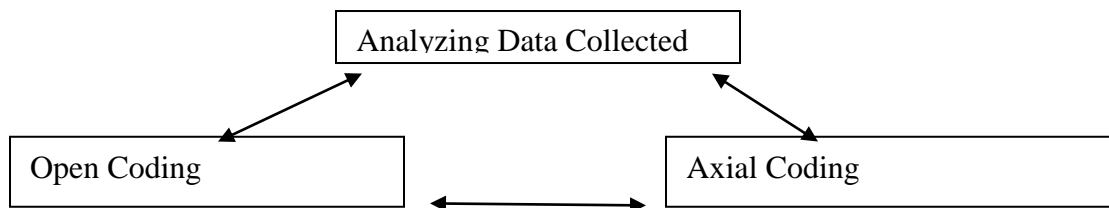
At this phase, as claimed by Strauss (1987) the researcher decides which category is central to his/her research project and then moves into selective coding.

### **6.6. Ground Theory Analysis Process**

The aim of the data analysis using the grounded theory approach is to discover the theory buried in the data. The grounded theory as claimed by Strauss (1987:4) is not a specific method or technique, but it is a style of doing qualitative analysis which includes a number of distinct characteristics such as theoretical sampling and some methodological guidelines and the use of a coding paradigm. These codes make the components of the theory more visible because "Ground theory coding requires us to stop and ask analytic questions of the data we have gathered," as claimed by Charmaz (2006).

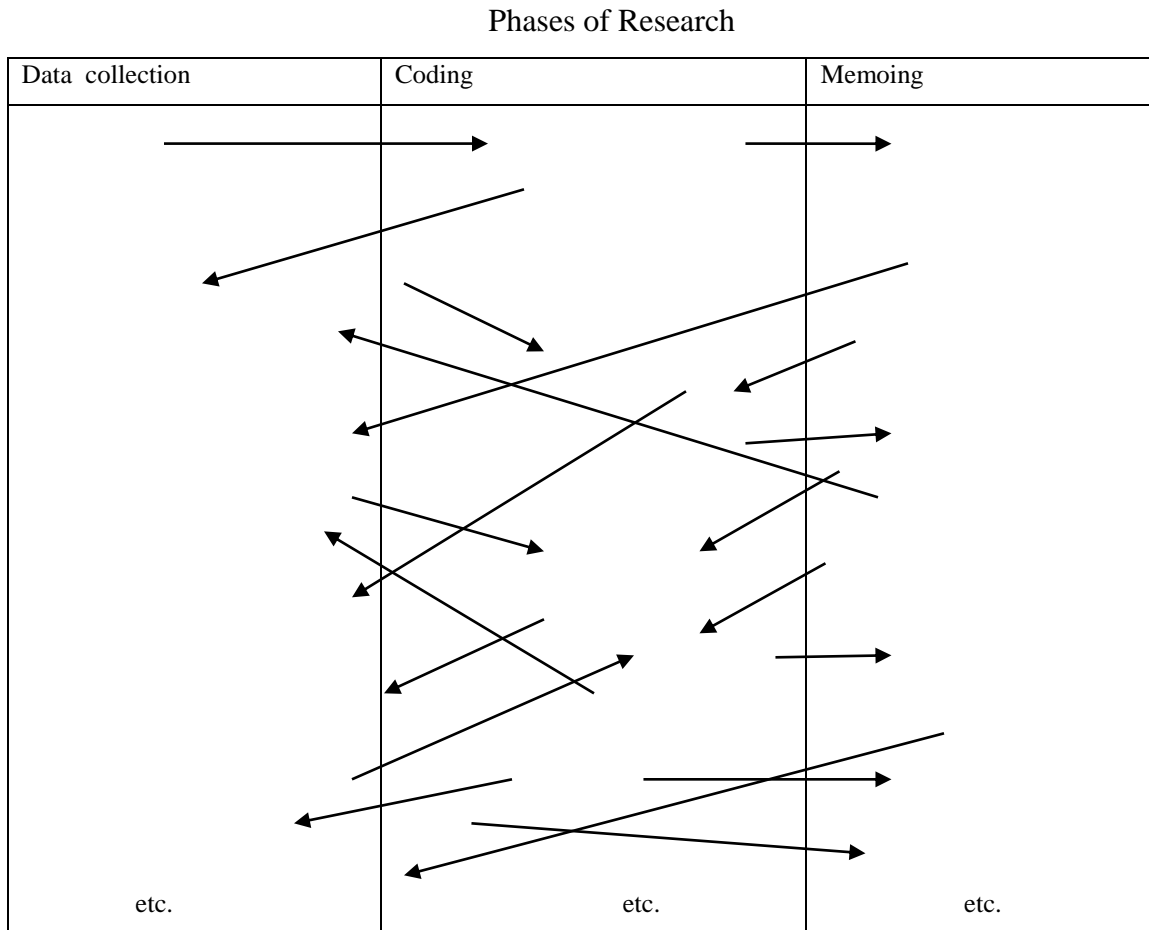
#### **6.6.1. Analysis Procedure**

In order to analyze the data collected by the interview, observations and the dairies, the researcher followed a number of stages. First, the researcher added notes to the margins of the interviews and to students' dairies and observations (See Appendix H). Analyzing the data is a non-linear process and usually it is recursive and it is neither a static nor a rigid process as claimed by Strauss and Corbin (1998). This means that the researcher may move back and forth between types of coding.



**Figure 6.8. Shows Data Analysis.**

At the same time the present researcher went on moving back and forth among the collecting of data, coding and memoing as suggested by Strauss. The figure below shows the coding paradigm.



**Figure 6.9. Coding paradigm** (Strauss:1987:19).

As suggested by Denscombe (2010:116), analyzing data should often involve:

- Coding and categorizing the data collected.
- Constant comparison of the emerging codes and categories with the data.
- Checking the codes and categories with the new data collected.
- Creating concepts and theories which are grounded in the data.

The following sections cast light on each stage and explain the analysis procedure.

#### **6.6.2. Open Coding:**

At the first stage, the researcher fractured the data collected word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence and paragraph-by-paragraph. Coding, using gerund was added in



the form of categorizing segments of data with a short name that reflects each item of data. Coding is considered to be the first step in moving beyond concrete statements of the data and to make analytic interpretations (Charmaz: 2006, Strauss: 1987) (See Appendix H). This way of coding is important because as suggested by Charmaz (2006:48) it "curbs our tendencies to make conceptual leaps and to adopt extant theories *before* we have done the necessary analytic work." (Italics in the origin). At this stage none of the data were excluded, so all the data were accepted in order to find the most preferred strategies and the most frequently used ones to be highlighted. The aim of open coding as claimed by Strauss (1987:28) is to generate concepts which fit the data. These concepts are not permanent but they may lead to further issues in terms of conditions, strategies, interactions and consequences.

Table 6.9 provides the main results of the open coding of the learning strategies describing what sub-strategies participants utilize to enhance their learning. The table below depicts six superordinate and several subordinate categories emerged from the analysis of the participants' learning strategies employed to improve their learning. The superordinate categories include memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies.

***Table 6.9 Major categories of Language Learning Strategies***

Major Categories	Associated Concepts
Memory Strategies	memorizing new words, learning spelling,
	learning grammar rules, exchanging experience
Cognitive Strategies	preparing for the test, preferring to work alone or with others, using a dictionary, translating, guessing the meaning of new words, underlining the main ideas, thinking in Arabic, asking for help, watching English programs on TVs

#### Compensation Strategies

Guessing the meaning of new words while reading and listening, asking for help, compensating while writing or listening.

#### Metacognitive Strategies

Taking notes during the lectures, planning and organizing ideas before writing, how to become a better English language learner.

#### Affective Strategies

feelings during presentations, speaking with a native speaker,

#### Social Strategies

reviewing lessons with a friend, checking spelling and pronunciation, attitudes towards other people's cultures.

The category most frequently used by the students was writing the new words several times and repeating them orally many times. This may reveal that most of the students, whether more able or slow learners use the same strategies to learn new words. Regarding grammar rules, the focus on grammar seems to be influenced by students' specialty. However, a considerable number of the participants reported that grammar was important. This focus on grammar and vocabulary may reflect the way these student were taught at schools in the past. Another category which the interview revealed was that the participants prefer to study and review their lessons alone rather than with others. Many of the participants use bilingual dictionaries and tend to translate English words into Arabic. When they write, many of them reported that they used to think in Arabic and then 'translate' into English.

This study also revealed that students keep with them notebooks during the lectures to write down the new words and grammar rules. The participants' responses gave the least emphasis to watching English films, maybe because of cultural reasons. Section x will elaborate on this in detail.

What students wrote in their diaries may reveal that they have utilized from the learning strategies they were taught and from collaborative learning, "working in group and learning strategies are useful."

The researcher completed the open coding procedures and then categorized all the interview questions that are similar together in order to make it easy to control (Appendix). The next stage is axial coding.

### **6.6.3. Axial Coding**

This stage is an essential aspect of the previous one and it composed of deep analysis carried out around a category at a time pertaining the paradigm items such as conditions, consequences and so on. At this stage, which is called axial coding, because the analyzing moves around the 'axis' of one category each time (Strauss: 1987), the researcher has excluded or combined some categories in order to connect similar categories and define properties and sought the relationships between the category and other categories and subcategories. During the axial coding, the researcher describes properties of categories, looks for conditions, and consequences, searches for strategies and interactions and builds relations between categories. As claimed by Strauss and Corbin (1987) during axial coding, analysts search answers for questions such as why, how come, where, when, how and with what consequences. The answers to these questions, in their opinion, uncover the relationships among categories. The results of the interviews and students' diaries revealed core categories and showed what language learning strategies these students preferred using and how frequently they use. They also showed students' views regarding teaching methods and collaborative learning.

To explore the relationships among categories and their subcategories a model (below) suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990) was used.

Causal conditions → phenomenon → context →intervening conditions  
→actions/interaction strategies→ consequences

**Table 6.10 Depicts the Paradigm Model**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Description (Memo)</b>
Phenomenon	Language learning strategies
Causal Condition	Learners face difficulty in using language

	learning strategies effectively
Context	Helping students use LLS effectively
Intervening Conditions	Teaching these strategies and group work will help students to use these strategies efficiently
Action/Interaction Strategies	Collaborative learning, ZPD and scaffolding will help them to receive assistance from more able ones who know these strategies better.
Consequences	Students will be able to employ effective strategies efficiently.

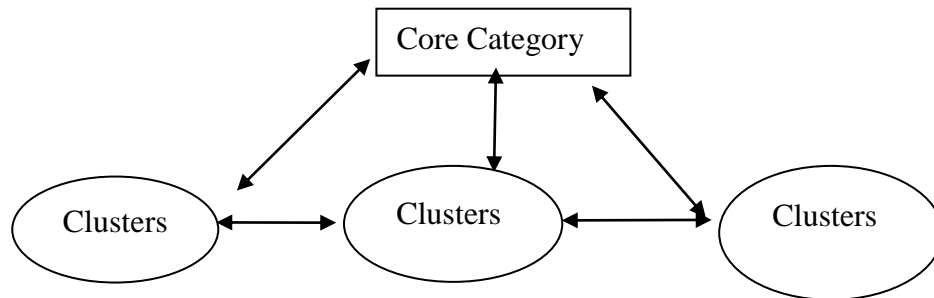
The researcher scrutinized the data and posed the following questions as suggested by Corbin and Strauss (1990):

1. What were the conditions that make learning strategies difficult and ineffective? It can be hypothesized that if students were not taught these strategies or helped by students who are more able they face difficulty in using them efficiently.
2. In what context were these learning strategies employed? For these students to effectively employ learning strategies, teachers should teach them explicitly and learners should exchange these strategies with each other and scaffolding should be offered on the right time.
3. By what actions/interactions did they occur? Explicit teaching, collaborative learning, and group work may be of great help.
4. What were the consequences? It is expected that at the end of the semester, students would be able to use these strategies efficiently.

#### ***6.6.4 Selective Coding***

Selective coding as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998) is the process linking categories to their subcategories. It “Means the analysts delimits coding to only those

codes that relate to the core codes in sufficient ways as to be used in a parsimonious theory”, Strauss (1987:33). The core code is important because it leads further to theoretical sampling and data collection as asserted the same author. At this stage, the researcher searches for the conditions, consequences and others that may relate to the core category. Having completed the three important stages of coding, the following section casts light on the theoretical coding.



**Figure 6.10 Selective Coding and Core Category** (Strauss, 1987:70)

As clarified by Strauss (1987:70) each circle in Figure represents clusters while the rectangle stands for the core category.

At this phase of selective coding, (see Figure 6.11) the researcher has to link categories and subcategories systematically around a core category. Since the theory building is the aim of this project, and then the findings should be presented as a set of integral concepts, (Strauss and Corbin: 1998).

**Figure 6.11 depicts an example of a selective coding storytelling memo:**

<p><b>Core category</b></p> <p>This is to show the link between language learning strategies and students' effort to learn</p>
<p><b>The role of language learning strategies in enhancing students' learning</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The participants have some common memory strategies in common, e.g. writing the new words several times. Repeating the new word several times, thinking that grammar is important (all this resulted probably from the way they were taught).</li> <li>2. Almost all of the students studied English for 10 years before they joined the university.</li> </ol>

3. Almost most of the students were taught by expatriate teachers.
4. Collaborative learning, group work and language learning instruction seem to have impact on the efficient use of learning strategies (as they reported in their diaries and their responses to the interview.)
5. Most of the participants used to depend heavily on teachers.

#### ***6.7. Theoretical Construct by Organizing Themes into more Abstract Concepts***

It is suggested by Charmaz (2006:113) to stop gathering new data when categories are saturated which means that gathering fresh data sparks no new theoretical insights and does not reveal new properties of core theoretical categories. However, Glaser (2001) cited in Charmaz (2006) has a different view. In his view, saturation is not finding the same pattern again and again, but “it is the conceptualization of comparisons of these incidents which yield different properties of the pattern, until no new properties of the pattern emerge”. On the other hand, Strauss and Corbin (1998) have a more comprehensive definition of saturation. They suggest that a category is said to be saturated at a time when no new information yields during coding, in other words, no new properties, dimensions, conditions, action/interactions, or consequences emerge from the data. The researcher adopts their view because it is more comprehensive. Moreover, theoretical codes as asserted by Charmaz (2006:63) postulate possible links between categories which have been developed during the coding process. Therefore, theoretical coding conceptualizes how the basic codes are related, moreover, moves the analytic story in a theoretical direction. This way, the analysis becomes coherent and comprehensible. The role of theoretical coding is thus to explore the saturated categories which may aid the researcher to develop conceptual links among categories.

On the other hand, the theoretical construct which is an abstract concept that arranges a group of themes appropriate for a theoretical framework, transfers the analysis from the state of subjective experience description established in repeating ideas and themes into a more abstract and theoretical level as pointed out by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003).

In this study, the category was saturated after the interviews and students' diaries were completed and the teachers' observations were over. At this point, the researcher postulated that no more interviews were necessary and new further observation or diaries were needed.

### ***6.8 The Main Findings***

As mentioned above, the researcher has completed the work at the level of the text. That was a filtering process during which some parts of the text were excluded and others were included. Having said that, this section pulls together what has been done in the previous sections.

It was stated above that the purpose of this chapter is to employ ground theory approach to construct theories which may support the rich diverse data collected from the participants using different tools. Therefore, the ultimate aim of this study is to develop theoretical constructs by arranging themes into abstract concepts.

This section will cast light on why and how frequently those learners who participated in this project employ language learning strategies and to highlight the impact of the methods of teaching in their choices, besides exploring their views about collaborative learning.

As stated before an interview was conducted to complement the findings of other tools. The interview tackled the same learning strategies categories dealt with in SILL (see appendix D). At the beginning the participants were 10 students selected randomly from the TG. Eight of the interviewees were females. They were classified, according to their TOEFL grades, as successful/unsuccessful learners. The researcher did his best to select students who represent high, medium and low achievers to be similar to the questionnaire population and also to represent different majors that comprise the class. The interview was conducted in the researcher's office, near the end of the semester and it took almost two weeks to finish. It was not recorded because of the sensitivity of recording female students. In presenting and interpreting students' interview, the researcher did his best to be objective and to avoid as far as he could subjective judgments. The presentation of the interview is a rewritten version.

During the interview, the teacher used to call the students in their first name as it is the norm at the university. The interview was conducted in both Arabic and English,

whichever was preferred by the interviewee. The interview took almost 50 minutes, sometimes, with some students completed in two sessions due to their timetable. He could only interview six students because of the time constraint.

At the beginning he filled a form with some necessary bio-date including the following information:

Gender:

Age:

Major:

Year of Study at the university:

TOEFL score:

Language learning Experience:

Motivation

The interview proceeded. At the beginning, the teacher greeted the students and let him/her be seated. Then he told him/her not worry about the interview and that he would only take notes and his/her voice will not be recorded and that the interview has nothing to do with semester marks or with his/her performance in the class. After being sure that the student took the matter in that way and they were not worry or skeptical about the interview, the interview commenced by filling the bio-data form and then answering the questions of the interview. The names given bellow are not the real names of the interviewees. In what follows, the findings from the interviews are provided.

### ***6.8.1 Memory Strategies***

***Table 6.12: Memories strategies employed by the participants.***

Memorizing new words	Repeated ideas
Learning spelling	Varies
Grammatical rules	Participants' specialty has its impact
Exchanging experience with classmates	Not always

The researcher discussed with the participants to explore how they employ memory strategies. The topics discussed ranged from learning and memorizing new words, spelling, grammatical rules and whether students exchange the best way of using these strategies among each other. It was noticed that some participants were expressing the same idea, may be with the same or similar words, which are termed by Auerbach and



Silverstein (2003:54) *repeating ideas*. They define repeating idea as an idea, which is expressed in related text by two or more participants. In their opinion, these repeating ideas are the starting building blocks that may finally create a theoretical narrative. The participants' responses can be divided into the following categories and subcategories: writing the new words several times and repeating them orally, grammar is thought to be important either for the exam or for learning the language. The participants also exchange with each other strategies of memorizing new words and the best ways of learning them.

The table below gives an example of repeated ideas pertaining memorizing new words.

***Table 6.13 depicts the repeated ideas from the participants***

Repeated ideas for the interview question:

1. How do you memorize new English words?

AMEL: To memorize the new word, I write the word several times on a piece of paper or repeat it several times orally.

MARIAM: I memorize new words by repeating the word several time, first orally, then in written form.

IBTISAM: Trying to repeat the new words several times to memorize and learn 'but in vein'.

ALI: The best way for me to memorize new words is to write down the words many times and use then in sentences repeatedly.

AMANI: I write new words in my notebook and then repeat them orally, then try to use them orally, and then try to use them in proper sentences.

AHMED: I memorize new words by repeating them orally several times.

Going through the above repeated ideas reveal that the research participants believe that repeating the new words several times and using them in sentences consolidate memorizing and enhance learning.

2. What helps you memorize the spelling of new words?

The interviewees' responses were different to this question. For example, for Amel, spelling is a problem, while Mariam tries to write the words several times to learn the spelling of the word. Ibtisam also repeats the same idea as her colleague Amel and thinks spelling as a problem. Ali thinks that writing and using the words many times

makes it easy for him to memorize the spelling. Amani repeats the words orally many times to memorize the spelling, while Ahmed complains about the spelling who always makes spelling mistakes. All the participants, even those who complain, try to do something to help them memorize the spelling of new words and all of them know how important the spelling is.

3. How do you learn/memorize grammatical rules to apply them later when you write or speak?

The researcher has noticed that the participant's specialty has an impact on their responses to this question. For example, Amel's response was, "I know grammar is very important but I do not need it in my studies (Nursing)", while Mariam, a Pharmacy student's response was, "I don't trouble myself with learning grammatical rules. ....I think it is important because of the exam." The same idea came from Ibtisam a student of Special Education who responded, "I don't try to memorize grammatical rules, except for those I expect to appear in the exam." Ali who studies Engineering almost have the same idea, "I don't try to memorize grammatical rules but I do my best to understand from the teacher and the textbook, then try to produce similar sentences." On the other hand, Amani, a Translation student has a different opinion, "I think that grammar is very important and so I try to learn grammar rules. For this I keep a notebook to write the grammatical rules, read the rules many times, and try to apply them when I write." Ahmed who studies Arabic does not like grammar, "I don't like grammar and I don't memorize. I don't think I need grammar."

4. How do you know how other students learn new words?

The aim of this question was to explore whether these students exchange learning experience with each other or not. Amel said that she sometimes used to ask her friends how they learn the meanings and spelling of the unfamiliar words. Mariam, on the other hand does not ask her class/roommates how they learn because she thinks that everyone has their own way that suits them. Although Ibtisam does not bother herself with how others learn, she would be happy if she could know. The same this with Ali, Amani and Ahmed, they never asks others how they learn.

### **6.8.2. Cognitive Strategies**

Table 6.14 casts light on the cognitive strategies employed by the participants.

***Table 6.14: Cognitive Strategies Employed by the participants***

Preparing for the test	Almost most of the participants prepare their lesson ahead of their teachers
Preferring to work alone or with others	The majority tends to work alone
Using a dictionary	Generally the participants use bilingual dictionaries
Asking help from others	Sometimes the participants ask for help
Translating new words into Arabic	Almost always the participants translate new words into Arabic
How to overcome the difficulty of unfamiliar words?	Guessing from the context is a strategy employed by some of the participants
Underlining the main ideas in a text.	This strategy depends. The more able ones utilize it while the less able do not. After being taught, they reported that they would employ.
Thinking in Arabic while writing in English.	This is a problem the majority complain about
Asking a classmate to help to plan and organize before writing.	They started doing after being taught how.
Utilizing from English programmes.	It seems that their cultural background has a negative impact on this.

The researcher used a variety of tools (interview, diaries and his own observations) to explore how the participants employ cognitive strategies. Their responses were summarized in the table above. In what follows, the researcher will discuss them in detail.

Ahmed studies English close to the exam period and his friends help him prepare for the exam. “I like to study alone but English is very difficult so I ask my friends to help me. I use the dictionary when I read the English textbook. It is very difficult. I use a bilingual dictionary to translate. I know how to get the meanings of words from my mobile dictionary. I cannot understand the textbook if I do not translate it. I use the

dictionary and ask my friends to translate words into Arabic. The teacher does not give the meanings in Arabic. Many words are difficult, so I always use the dictionary. I do not underline. I learn the new vocabulary to pass the exam. “I find writing is very difficult. I just write two or three words in English and ask my friends to help to write full paragraphs; sometimes they help and sometimes they are busy or do not want to help,” Ahmed explains. When the researcher asked him why he did not go to the Writing Center, he said, “In the Writing Center, they need completed pieces of work to proofread.” Ahmed does not watch English films but does like listening to English songs.

#### ***6.8.3 Compensation Strategies***

“I do not guess, because I find all words difficult. I always ask my friends to explain the text in Arabic and when it comes to writing, I always need someone to explain the question in Arabic.”

#### ***6.8.4 Metacognitive Strategies***

He writes in his notebooks all vocabulary and lists the words with their meanings and pronunciation in Arabic. When asked by the researcher whether he plans or organizes his ideas before he writes, he laughed and said, “I do not know how to write a paragraph.” The researcher proceeded to the next question. Ahmed does not watch English films and does not want to excel in English.

#### ***6.8.5 Affective Strategies***

Ahmed finds having to give presentations dreadful but his teachers always insists upon them, which he thoroughly dislikes. He does not speak with native speakers because all those who teach him are Arabic speakers.

#### ***6.8.6 Social Strategies***

He finds reviewing English with others is useful because they can translate any difficult word in Arabic. Ahmed explains his thoughts on the different cultures within the university: “The first time I came to the university (in the Foundation Institute) I felt angry when I found female teachers not wearing *hijab* but now it is normal. I know that is their culture; it is different from our culture.”

### 6.8.7 General Questions

Teaching learning strategies may be good with capable students who understand English. Working in groups is also beneficial because students help each other. At this point he laughed and said, “It would be nice if you let us do the exam in groups.”

### 6.9. Students’ Diaries:

This section presents the diaries of students as a research tool used to collect data. The researcher bears in mind the precautions pointed out by Friedman (2012:190); that the data collected by diaries may be selective and subjective because they represent the participant’s view of event rather than the event itself.

The researcher distributed guidelines to the students and showed them how to write their diaries, explaining to them the purpose of writing these diaries and that they were free to participate or withdraw at any time. He assured them that the writing of (or not writing of) diaries had nothing to do with the exam or their performance in class, and that they did not need to write their names or give any information that may disclose their identities. At the end of the semester, the researcher collected the diaries and classified them. Despite being reminded on a weekly basis, not all students brought their diaries. Some of the diaries that were collected were illegible and subsequently were excluded.

Analysis of the diaries collected and the outcomes will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

**Student A** wrote:

*“This week I learn some word like focus, attract, and increase. I used the strategies I learn. The lesson was clear and easy. Group work was help me The homework help me in English skills”*

A closer look at what Student A wrote may reveal his/her level in writing in English. His/her weakness in grammar is very obvious in that they could hardly express themselves in English. In spite of that, s/he was able to show the struggle in learning English. His/her aim is to learn some new words, maybe using some memory strategies taught (was not able to spell strategies correctly). For this student the lesson was easy, which may mean that s/he benefited from the introduction of learning strategies or from the collaborative learning. This is probably why s/he uses the two words ‘clear’ and ‘easy’.

S/he also says that “the homework help me in English skills”. According to the Teacher’s Guide, homework should include learning strategies practice to be used outside the classroom. What this student has written may be an indication that students may use learning strategies outside the classroom to review their lessons and to do their homework, which may in turn help them in acquiring skills. This student also said that the group work helped them. They did not mentioned how, but they probably received helpful scaffolding.

**Student B** wrote:

*“The activities that was useful for me the group work in the classroom useful. I focus on grammar and vocabulary as well as extensive reading”*

*“Dear instructor,*

*I am trying to improve my grammar in this course I try to benefit from other students in the class as well but the book is not very good it doesn’t give much exercise for each question or task it have the answer or it. This weeks was good apart from these task in the book about looking at pictures and logos is a complete waste of time.”*

It is obvious that the above student has a problem in writing in English. The chief problem is with grammar and punctuation. In spite of this, the student could say s/he has benefited from the group work. From his/her focus on grammar and vocabulary, one may interpret the impact of traditional teaching in Oman on these students (looking at language as a form of structure rather than a means of communication). The student mentions that s/he did some extensive reading. The aim of the extensive reading, which is provided to students on the university website (Moodle), is to encourage self-learning and to develop the habit of reading for pleasure.

In his/her letter to the instructor the student reiterates their attempt to improve their grammar. This may support the researcher’s hypothesis that teaching methods play a substantial role in the way students learn. As discussed in the literature review, some teachers who are influenced by grammar-translation method still focus on the teaching of grammar. The student mentions that the classroom was useful for him/her, perhaps because of the way s/he was taught. S/he complains that the book has not provided exercises which are accompanied by answers (spoon-feeding). This may also reflect the way some methods of teaching always help students with answers instead of encouraging

students to think independently. In this student's opinion, looking at pictures is a waste of time. S/he is probably referring to the warm-up lessons. At the beginning of each lesson certain pictures are used to activate students' background knowledge and elicit some information from them before commencing with the lesson.

**Student C** wrote:

*"I start of by writing what activities was the most useful, course work was the best because it enables me to use what I have learned in the classroom, the Moodle exercises wasn't really good in my opinion because I do not see what does the course work has to do with the Moodle exercises such as grammar but the vocabulary exercises used the same words that we learned in the chapter. My progress was that whatever I learned in the classroom I try to practice my skills using the exercise that is in the book as well as the Moodle"*

*"Dear Instructor,*

*I am improving my weakest area by trying to benefit from all the things you say in the class, and try to practice what I have learned in the book exercise and the Moodle. This week's lesson was in my mind a waste of time solving the books reading exercise was boring but the grammar was good. The reading strategies that you told us about was great such as skimming, scanning, guessing the words meaning, and I have been using these strategies to improve my skills. The students benefitted me with things that I didn't know also the team work in the class I think is very good to share our ideas and skills."*

This student was able to express himself/herself more articulately than the others. This student seems to use the strategies s/he was taught outside the classroom " ... enables me to use what I have learned in the classroom." For this student, learning English may also mean learning vocabulary and grammar, possibly as they were taught at schools earlier. It appears that for this student, the teaching of learning strategies was useful and beneficial (" ... was great") and that s/he started using them outside the classroom. Once again, it seems that s/he benefited from the group work because s/he talks about sharing "our ideas and skills".

Such diaries, besides sharing with teachers the students' opinions on their progress and the way they are being taught, shed light on the level of the students and the problems they face in expressing themselves. Moreover, these diaries help students to

write and practice their writing skills. In addition to this, diaries allow students to ask each other to proofread and edit their work.

**Student D** wrote:

*“I found the benefits from the team work and from the Moodle. My vocabulary and grammar improved. In the class we go quickly and grammar needs more time in teaching. I want to say one point; you are not looking at all the group. You only check the work of few groups.”*

This student also has some problem in expressing himself/herself in English. Like his/her classmates, improving English also means learning grammar and vocabulary. In the researcher’s opinion, a great deal of work is needed to change this attitude. This student needs much time to spend on grammar because many students, as their diaries indicate, learning English means leaning grammar. Therefore, if such attitudes are not amended, teaching English by focusing on other areas (such as learning English for communicative means) may appear to be a waste of time. It seems that this student has a negative view of autonomous learning because s/he criticizes the teaching for not checking the work of all students.

**Student E** wrote:

*“The group work and learning strategies are useful. The exercises on the Moodle are meaningful and useful. You don’t explain grammar so much and we don’t understand grammar. You don’t help us answer the exercises in the book inside the classroom step by step”*

Close scrutiny of what this student writes possibly illustrates the impact of the traditional way of teaching. That is to say, teaching English with a focus on grammar and spoon-feeding is the type of teaching that s/he thinks may satisfy him/her. Although s/he starts by saying that the group work and learning strategies were useful, she complains about the limited amount of time spent on grammar and the lack of help from the teacher in completing exercises in the book. As discussed in the literature review, some teachers at Oman General Education schools used to teach English with a focus on the exams (examination-oriented teaching), i.e. they help students answer the exercises ‘step by step’ and spend a lot of time explaining grammatical rules, and so on.

**Student F** wrote:



*“Every day I choose time to take practice at Moodle to do quiz and assignments. At night often I memorize new words. I want to tell you about your teaching, I want to you to focus in grammar because it is very important. And you should correct us when we make mistakes. I feel sometimes comfortable when you explain but sometimes not and I hope you renew your explain method. Group work and learning strategies useful and benefited a lot.”*

It is evident that this student is not fully competent in English and somewhat struggles to articulate himself/herself. The researcher often notices that students use the expression ‘I want you’ which sounds impolite; however, students usually use it regardless of whether it is spoken or written. One possible explanation for why students insist on using this expression is that they directly translate it from the Arabic language. The equivalent of this expression in Arabic is acceptable. This may illustrate the role of culture in learning a foreign language. Culturally speaking, however, these students have no problems translating an expression from their mother tongue into the target language, regardless of the culture of the speakers of the target language. The issue of literal translation is a problem that curriculum writers should take into consideration.

Another point which is worth mentioning is this Student F’s perception of grammar: “I want you to focus in (sic) grammar.” Like many other students, s/he thinks reviewing English means memorizing vocabulary and learning grammar. This may support the hypothesis of this study that the teaching methods have considerable impact on the way students learn. As discussed in the literature review, one of the problems of teaching English in the Gulf in general, and in Oman in particular, is the traditional way of teaching English and the heavy focus on the exam.

The student stated that s/he was happy with the group work and the learning strategies, stating that s/he benefited from them. However, s/he did show whether s/he was using these learning strategies outside the classroom or indeed how. The student writes about how s/he perceived the teaching: “you should correct us when we make mistakes”. This is how s/he believes teaching should be conducted. This may indicate that despite his/her positive opinion about group work, s/he did not ask his/her classmate to correct her/him. S/he also evaluated the teaching method in her/his own way: “I feel sometimes comfortable when you explain but sometimes not and I hope you renew your

explain method.” This may indicate that teachers should vary their methods from time to time because adhering to only one way of teaching may become tedious.

**Student G** wrote:

*“This week I learn many things. The first thing I save some words (s/he probably meant ‘memorized’) and used the world (may mean word) in sentences. Also I go to the Moodle and I do many practice go to listen the paragraph and know the meaning of the vocabulary. Also I use dictionary to know some words. This week I see the film and learn some new words from it.”*

The above piece of writing gives good indication to the teacher about their students’ weaknesses. S/he fails to form simple, correct sentences. However it shows how keen this student is to use different types of learning strategies (such as cognitive and metacognitive). S/he has never used any affective or social strategies as these students rarely use those types of strategy (as the findings of the self-reported questionnaire illustrated).

Although s/he states nothing about his/her opinion on the teaching of learning strategies, it seems s/he has benefited from them and tried to use them outside the classroom. Nothing is mentioned about group work.

A closer look also reveals that the focus of this student was on vocabulary: “I memorizes some words and pot them in sentences, Know the meaning of the vocabulary. Also use the dictionary to know some words, ... learn from the film.” S/he does not mention his/her intention behind learning grammar. As noticed by the researcher, those who learn English as a means of studying other courses such as Engineering, Nursing and Pharmacy are not interested in grammar but rather want to learn vocabulary (this is something which needs further investigation for confirmation). We can see that this student uses the word ‘save’, probably meaning ‘memorized’, and the word ‘see’ instead of ‘watch’. This may be due to the fact that these students simply translate from their mother tongue, an ineffective strategy which could greatly benefit from teacher intervention.

**Student H** wrote:

*“This week I learn more vocabulary. In fact it’s easy to study because we discuss in class with our group then with the teacher. I do some activities in the model (may mean*

Moodle) *I do tow (may mean two) practices about vocabulary and other types of word (noun, verb, adjectives) (may mean lexical category). Also started to read a story about 'The Gift of Wise Men'.*

*Finally, I start improve my vocabulary and English from discuss with group."*

A closer look at what this student writes reveals that, regardless of the occasional incorrect use of language, s/he was able to reflect his/her interaction with the 'new' method of teaching adopted. One may notice that the group discussion in the classroom made it easy for him/her to review the lesson outside the classroom. As s/he wrote, s/he uses the Moodle appropriately to review the vocabulary and the grammar. To improve reading skills s/he started reading a story outside the classroom.

As s/he noticed, his/her English started improving from the help s/he received from other peers: "from discussion with the group".

Like other students s/he did not view the English language as a communicative means or as a mediator which can be used in socialization. It seems that the student in question views English as a university subject in which they need to excel in order to achieve high marks. They use all their cognitive abilities to memorize and learn. Teachers need to help change this attitude towards English language learning. In fact, it is important for teachers to change their attitudes first and then the students will follow suit. The researcher reiterates that the way these students are (and were) taught the language has had a possible impact on the way students learn and perceive the language. To change the way students learn the language requires a change in the way they perceive the language.

In spite of the importance for the language to be used communicatively inside and outside the classroom, this communicative use of language has been absent from the students' diaries thus far.

**Student I** wrote:

*"I want to tell you one thing. First when you explain any thing try to clear it (may mean make it clear) and try to explain the meaning of difficult word in Arabic because many students major is not English. This week's lesson is very important and I try to know all thing. My teacher give us many important thing, he give us learning strategies to improve English skills. I started to learn learning strategies to do very well. This week I try with*

*my friends to know all thing they don't know and I hope to do very well in other weeks for all students"*

Student I struggled to eloquently express himself/herself in English. In terms of stylistics, it is apparent that the student used the expression "I want" and never used "please", which may be as a result of thinking first in Arabic, then translating into English. Teachers need to be aware of these factors to intervene and try to eliminate these ineffective strategies.

The student not only translated the expression from Arabic into English, but also asked the teacher to explain words and to translate the 'difficult' words into English so as to make it easy for the students to understand. This is his/her point of view and perhaps there are others who share this view. Although s/he did not show whether s/he was using learning strategies outside the classroom, s/he said s/he learnt these strategies.

Another interesting point s/he mentions is the fact that s/he started to use social strategies: "I try with my friends to know ... ." This indicates that these students may change their attitudes towards collaborative work and social strategies which, according to the findings, were among the least common strategies reported to be used.

**Student J** wrote:

*"The Moodle exercises was the most meaningful because they improved my grammar and vocabulary.*

*To improve other skills:*

- 1. Listen to English songs from Sami Youssef.*
- 2. I read course instructions*
- 3. I write whatsapp messages in English*
- 4. I spoke English with my friends*

*I also did hard work in reading of English 2 textbook. I went through the Moodle and work in my assignment.*

*This week I tried to translate some words to improve my reading skills. This week lessons were very good. Thank you for your ways and strategies you are teaching. I have started the new strategies that you teach us. I've got benefit with group work and helping each other."*

Although it appears that this student benefited from the learning strategies taught and from the group work, still s/he is using her own ones which seem not be effective: “I tried to translate some words to improve my reading skills”. The researcher noticed that many students translate the vocabulary from English into Arabic rather than guessing and inferring from the context, using the dictionary or overlooking the word if it is not a key part of the text. Translating word by word may result in slow reading, and focusing on the words rather than the global meaning of the text may hinder understanding.

A good point this student raises is the fact that s/he started using the language communicatively (“I spoke English with my friends.” and “I wrote ‘WhatsApp’ messages in English.”). S/he also uses the strategies from the classroom, although s/he does not explain how and when. S/he acknowledged the help s/he received from the group work. The following section covers the researcher’s observations.

#### **6.10 Observation**

As discussed in Chapter Five, observation was one of the tools used to collect data for this study. The researcher started writing down his own observations from the beginning of the semester and depended mainly thereon. However, he tried to discuss with the teacher who taught the other treatment class and exchanged ideas with him. The specific aim of the observation was to answer the following questions:

1. What learning strategies do the students frequently use, for example to understand a reading text which contains unfamiliar words?
2. What learning strategies do students frequently use when they are asked to write a paragraph(s)?
3. How do ‘good language learners’ differ from the other students in terms of learning strategies?
4. How do the more able students help the less able ones?
5. How do less able students benefit from their more able peers and the teacher in dealing with a specific skill, e.g. reading, writing?

Before presenting the data collected by this tool, it is best to give a clear image of the context in which the observation took place.

The setting of the traditional classrooms is known to be a large room with rows of desks facing the ‘blackboard’, where the teacher usually stands and supposedly imparts

information to his/her students. Such classrooms are known as *teacher-fronted*. The classroom where this study was conducted was different to some extent. Instead of rows of desks, there were tables around which four to five students sat facing each other, not all of them necessarily facing the 'blackboard'. These classes are mainly arranged for skill courses (General English 1 and 2, Grammar and Communication Skills). It is worth mentioning that the male students sat apart from the female students, according to the cultural and religious constraints.

Inside the classroom, according to the university regulations, it is not permissible to move from one place to the other or to exit the classroom during the lecture without permission.

The way the classroom setting was designed made it easy for group work and collaborative learning. Observation usually started after the students began their work in groups.

Since joining the university (2005), the researcher has observed that when in the classroom; students tend to sit beside students they already know. Therefore, in the beginning, when the researcher tried to form groups based on the students' language levels, the students resisted the change. He convinced them that at least one 'good learner' was needed in each group to lead the group and to help those who need help and scaffolding. The researcher explained to the students what was required of each individual. He told them that new learning strategies would be introduced and that they would work together and help each other to implement these strategies. The teacher did not mention that the 'good' learners would help the 'weak' ones. But he said a cooperative attitude was needed and everyone should try to benefit from the group.

In what follows, the researcher will present the most salient observation he wrote down throughout the semester, mainly based on Oxford's (1986) classification of learning strategies.

#### **6.10.1 Memory Strategies**

When the lesson started, students were told to carry out the activities and discuss them together; it was apparent that the discussions were usually in Arabic, but students switched to English when approached by the teacher. Students would ask the teacher of any 'difficult' points as opposed to discussing them within their groups. The researcher

noticed that most of the students wrote new vocabulary translated into Arabic. Those who carried notebooks with them only wrote lists of words with Arabic translations, grammatical rules and page numbers for the homework. No student was seen to be in possession of a dictionary, although the researcher was told that they have built-in dictionaries on their mobile phones. When the researcher asked why they wrote the words in their notebooks, they said in order to review and memorize them later. Some wrote the pronunciation in Arabic (to remember the translation later). They started using these new words in sentences of their own, as they were directed to do. Gradually, the translation into Arabic reduced and students began to depend on the use of the new words in sentences of their own.

#### ***6.10.2 Cognitive Strategies***

The researcher noticed that students started underlining important ideas in groups, lessening the previously constant need to ask the teacher about every other difficulty. Although they did not participate as successfully as their peers, less able students, especially those from Arabic and Special Education sections, started questioning and increasingly tried to participate. Students were seen to be highlighting and writing down what they considered to be important points. Some students were still found sitting hopelessly, however, complaining that they did not understand and that they were unable to follow. When requested to do so by their teacher, there were attempts to summarize certain paragraphs, but this was not without its difficulties.

#### ***6.10.3 Compensation Strategies***

Students were in using compensation strategies and in their groups were found to be using the cues and key words within the questions to help answer the actual questions themselves. Other signs of compensation strategies were more difficult to observe. The researcher could not discern whether these students' mimes and gestures were a way of communicating their thoughts or if they were being circumlocutory by simply exhausting many synonymous words.

#### ***6.10.4 Metacognitive Strategies***

Some of these strategies were difficult to observe, such as paying attention, over viewing and making links with the background knowledge. In writing exercises it could be seen that students started planning and organizing before they started to write. To

confirm that students were indeed using these strategies, the researcher would circulate the class and often found students helping each other, discussing the topics they were assigned to write about.

#### **6.10.5 Affective Strategies**

The researcher found difficulty in observing affective strategies because they are mainly mental.

#### **6.10.6 Social strategies**

Although these were among the lowest-ranked strategies, it was evident that students started to employ them. For example, they began to ask each other for help and exchanged ideas. Collaborative learning was introduced and they started cooperating when doing most of the work inside the classroom.

### **6.11. Core Category (Phenomenon)**

The core category of this research was the language learning strategies and how they were impacted by factors such as English proficiency and teaching methods. The choice of learning strategies as a central phenomenon (see Figure x) was based on the fact that language learning strategies thought to be a broad category which embedded in the main research questions of how the teaching methods and English language proficiency may have impact on the use of these strategies either positively or negatively.

The aim of this study was to investigate the impact of teaching methods on the use of learning strategies as reiterated above. Therefore, the "story line" of the study exemplifies how the university students, learning English as the medium of instruction, employ learning strategies. It also casts light on the factors that influence their use of these strategies.

The language learning strategies explored were based on the division suggested by Oxford (1990). This study presents these learning strategy categories and how they are used by learners and how frequently they are utilized. As the interview and students' diaries revealed, these students use the strategies on their own but not always effectively. For example, they focus mainly on memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary. They also tend to translate new words into Arabic and when they write or speak in English, they think in Arabic. The researcher attributes these strategies to the way they were taught. As explained in the literature review, some teachers still use outdated teaching methods, e.g.



Grammar-Translation Method and Audiolingual method. Even those who follow Communicative language Teaching depend heavily on the teachers books which discourage creativity.

The core category explored in this study composed, as mentioned above, of six subcategories. The research investigated the frequencies learners use these categories and the factors that impact their use. These subcategories sought were;

- Memory strategies, to investigate how students memorize new words, spelling of these words, grammatical rules and whether students exchange experience with others.
- Cognitive strategies: The focus here was to know how students prepare for English test, whether they prefer working alone or with others, to what extent they use the dictionary and what type of dictionary they consult, whether they translate words into their native language and the extent to which they guess the meaning of new words from contexts and also to find out if they underline while reading the texts and so on.
- Compensation strategies: The aim of this subcategory was to find out how these students compensate for their lack of vocabulary.
- Metacognitive strategies: The focus of this subcategory was to know whether students take notes during the lectures, plan and organize before they commence writing and how they do to be good language learners.
- Affective strategies: The researchers intended to know the attitudes of the participants towards the English language and their learning and how they feel when they speak English in front of others and their feelings when they were corrected by others.
- Social strategies. Finally, the aim was to explore whether these participants exchange experience, work together and help each other or prefer working on their own and find out their attitudes towards other people's culture.

As stated in Methodology Chapter, this research uses mixed methods approach which merges the findings from each method, quantitative and qualitative to come to a conclusion. These finding will be discussed in Chapter Seven. In what follows the discussion turns to the main propositions of the theory.

#### **6.12. The main Suggestions of the Theory**

In order to present the theory, the researcher divides the core category into direct and indirect categories following Oxford (1990).

- ***The Direct Strategies***

Most of those who were interviewed reported using memory strategies. For example they write the new words several times to enhance memorizing them and at the same time they keep repeating the words orally for the same reason. The participants also think that grammar is important for correct English. However, some of them learn grammar only for the exams. For most of the interviewees, spelling is a problem.

- ***Cognitive Strategies***

Although most of them reported that they review their lessons every day, few do this do in groups. A considerable of the participants stated that they prefer reviewing their lessons alone. According to their responses, they tend to use bilingual dictionaries because they resort to translating into their mother tongue while reading. Moreover, the interviewees claim that that the try to guess from the context and highlight the main ideas while reading texts in English. the problem many of the them complain of was thinking in Arabic while writing and speaking in English. The researcher during his work at this university, students use sentences such as, “Teacher I want to see my marks” which is a mere translation from an Arabic expression. They may also write expressions such as, “I and my friend went to so and so”. This expression is acceptable in the Arabic language. The interview revealed that a considerable number of the participants used to plan and organize the ideas before they write.

- ***Compensation Strategies***

Asking help from other classmate was not uncommon among the participants. They reported that they may use synonymous or use simple words when failed to recall a certain word during a conversation or in writing.

## Indirect Strategies

These are further divided into:

- ***Metacognitive Strategies***

Almost all of them stated that they kept a notebook during the lectures to take notes. Most of them used to plan and organize their ideas before they write. Pronunciation was considered to be important for most of them, especially for those were studying English as their Major.

- ***Affective Strategies***

These students did not welcome the ideas of speaking in English in front of the class. This may be attributed to the fact that most of the students at the university are girls who come from a conservative community. For the same reason, maybe, they did not like being corrected in front of the classmates.

- ***Social Strategies***

It is noticeable that these strategies i.e. social strategies, are the least used among these students.

The researcher's own observations and students' diaries indicated that the participants' use of learning strategies were modified and became more efficient and oriented after being taught and collaborative learning was introduced and that the more able ones operated on the ZPD of the less able ones. It seems that the students the language learning strategies instruction lead to students' awareness of these strategies process and may encourage them to apply these strategies inside and outside the classroom.

This study adopted mixed methods approach; quantitative and qualitative approaches. For the latter, the grounded theory, as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998) was employed in this study. The researcher followed rigorously these authors' framework in terms of sampling, data collection and analysis (open coding, axial and selective coding were used). The sections above covered the following research questions:

1. What are the language learning strategies reported being utilized by the participants learning English in a foreign language context?

2. Would learning strategies instruction lead to awareness of the learning strategies process on the part of students and would it encourage them to apply these strategies beyond the classroom?

The following section covers the research questions:

1. To what extent do teachers perceive their students' frequency use of learning strategies?
2. In what way do teachers help learners to utilize learning strategies and to shift from ineffective to the most effective ones?

### ***6.13. Analysis of the teachers' Interview***

The purpose of this section is to discuss the oral interview carried out by the researcher with the teachers at the University of Nizwa. .

The researcher interviewed 10 teachers (there are 14 teachers at the department). The researcher made an effort to secure a representative sample (Nunan: 1992). The sample covers all the field taught, literature, linguistics and translation. They also belong to different countries and native and non-native English speakers, males and females. The questions of the interview covered teaching methods and learning strategies (see Appendix). The names of the teachers used in this section are not their real names.

Prof A

Professor A is a male teacher who has been teaching English for 40 years. He teaches literature and General English. When the researcher asked him, "Do you follow a specific method of teaching?" he responded, "actually I do not follow a specific way of teaching, I use my own method which is a combination of methods based on my beliefs and experience." He adds, "I may change my method according to the situation and the needs of the learners and the course I teach. When he was asked, "What do you think the 'best method' is?" He confirmed that 'there is no such a method.' Regarding the group work and the idea that more able students can help less able ones, he said was keen on that concept and described it as a very good idea, adding that he often organizes students into groups of mixed abilities to help each other.

Prof. A thinks that it is better for the teachers to know the strategies their students use. He also thinks that students may not use appropriate learning strategies if they are left alone. Prof. A suggests that students should be encouraged to discuss with each other the strategies they use and that openly discussing these strategies may help to create an awareness of strategies among the students. When the researcher asked him whether he encourages his students to work together to review their lessons outside the classroom, he answered positively. He agrees that teachers should model the learning strategies that they want their students to use in the classroom before teaching them. For teaching learning strategies explicitly, Prof. A thinks it depends on the students' needs. Generally, however, strategies are a useful concept to teach to students. He is also of the opinion that even if these strategies are taught, students are not obliged to make use of them but rather they are free to choose as they wish. In his opinion, teachers may comment on the learning strategies their students use and intervene when they think that may help. Prof. A sees that students should be given the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies they use. He discusses the strategies he finds more useful with his students, but rarely does so with his colleagues.

Mr. B

Mr. B holds an MA in Linguistics and has been teaching English for 18 years. He teaches Linguistic courses and General English at present. He does not follow a specific method of teaching. He uses a combination of methods depending on the course he teaches. He too believes that there exists no method which can be called the best method. According to Mr. B, a teacher can make a method the best or the worst. Mr. B thinks that group work can be useful with classes of a small size and it is not suitable for large-sized classes. Mr. B does not consider it to be important to know the learning strategies that are used by students. However, he thinks that students do not use any learning strategies if they are left to their own devices. In Mr. B's opinion it is very important to encourage students to discuss with each other the strategies they use and thinks that this may help them to become aware of the strategies they use. He confirmed that he encourages students to review their lessons outside the classrooms, especially those who live together in the university accommodation. When he was asked whether he agrees that teachers should model in class the learning strategies they want their students to use, he answered

positively. He has a conservative attitude to teaching of learning strategies explicitly. Teachers, in his opinion, should be tolerant of students' errors and mistakes and should provide help in correcting them. Mr. B also thinks it is not necessary to discuss with the students the strategies they use, and he never discusses these strategies with his students or his colleagues.

Dr. C

Dr. C is a female teacher. She holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics and has been teaching English for 23 years. She teaches linguistics courses and Communication Skills. She uses eclectic methods and for her the method she uses is determined by the subject she is teaching. She thinks communicative language teaching (CLT) can be considered the best method so far. In her opinion, group work does not suit Omani culture, because less able students will passively depend on more able ones, therefore, she considers it unfeasible. For Dr. C, it is important for teachers to be aware of the learning strategies their students use because it may help to introduce other learning strategies. She thinks that students do not use learning strategies if they are left alone to their own devices. She is not sure that encouraging students to discuss strategies with each other is effective. However, she thinks should that happen, it may assist students in becoming more aware of the strategies. She encourages students to work in groups to review their lessons outside the classroom. In her opinion, teachers should model the strategies they intend to introduce in the classroom for the students to see how they are employed. She suggests that learning strategies to be taught explicitly on the condition that students are given freedom to choose what they prefer. Dr. C believes that teachers should intervene while students are using learning strategies to ensure that the most appropriate and effective ones are being used. In terms of learners' errors, she thinks that learners need feedback from teachers on a regular basis. She suggests that it would be good if students evaluated the strategies they used to find out if they were effective. Moreover, she thinks that teachers should discuss the strategies they find more useful with their students. She occasionally discusses the strategies she intends to teach with her students, but not with her colleagues.

Dr. D

Dr. D is a male teacher who holds a PhD in Linguistics. He has been teaching English for 35 years. At present he teaches linguistic courses and General English.

Although he prefers CLT and Task-Based Teaching, he usually uses a combination of methods depending on the course he teaches and the standard of his students. He does not think that there is a method that can be labeled as the best method. For Dr. D, it is a good idea for students to work in a mixed group in order for the less able students get benefit from receive assistance from more able peers. In his opinion, it is important for teachers to be aware of the learning strategies their students use. He claims that students use their own learning strategies alone without being taught, but may use ineffective ones. He thinks that it is important for students to discuss the learning strategies they use with one other. This, in his opinion, helps develop a greater understanding of strategies they employ. He encourages his students to work in groups and review their lessons outside classroom, especially those who live in university accommodation.

According to Dr. D, teachers should not model the strategies in the classroom as he thinks. As he claims, learning strategies should not be taught explicitly. Students, in his opinion, use their own learning strategies and teachers may intervene while students are employing them to be sure that they are being used appropriately and effectively. In terms of students' errors he allows them to correct themselves first, after which he steps in to correct them himself. Students can evaluate the strategies they use for themselves to establish whether or not they are effective. Sometimes he discusses the strategies they used with his students, but never does so with his colleagues.

Mr. E

Mr. E holds an MA in Linguistics and has been teaching English for 16 years. At present, he teaches Linguistic courses and General English. With regards to following a specific method of teaching, he mentions that he uses a combination of methods and his methodology of teaching is determined by the course he is teaching. He does not believe in what is labeled as "the best method". Regarding group work, he believes it is useful only for small-sized classes. He thinks that it is not important to know the strategies students use because they all use different strategies and it is not easy for teachers to cater to all of them. Mr. E does not agree with teachers who think students do not use strategies on their own if they are left alone. He suggests that it is useful to encourage students to discuss with each other the strategies they use as discussion can lead to a more enhanced knowledge of the strategies used. He encourages students to work

together to review their lessons outside the classroom. In his opinion, teachers sometimes need to model the strategies they intend to teach in front of the students in the classroom. He agrees that learning strategies should be taught explicitly, and in particular to students who are taking General English as they require more support. For Mr. E, students are free to choose the strategies they are taught or to use their own. He argues that teachers should intervene while students are utilizing learning strategies, especially if they think students are using ineffective ones or using effective ones inappropriately. He is of the opinion that students' errors and mistakes should be corrected immediately either by students themselves or by the teachers. He rarely asks students to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies they are using. Mr. E. sometimes discusses the strategies he finds useful with his students. He neither discusses the strategies he intends to teach with his students, nor with his colleagues.

Dr. F

Dr. F holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics and has been teaching English for 15 years. At present she teaches linguistic courses and Spanish language as a foreign language for beginners. She prefers CLT, however, she does not adhere to it all the times . She uses methods eclectically. CLT may be considered to be the best method, but still teachers need to adjust their own method according to the situation as she argues. Although group work is valuable, it depends on the context. In general, it is positive to encourage more able students to help less able peers. In D. F's opinion, it is important to be aware of students' strategies. She is of the opinion that poor students use a narrow range of strategies and what they use may be ineffective. She believes that it is a good idea to encourage students to discuss with each other the strategies they use. this may help them be aware of their effectiveness. She rarely encourages students to work in groups to review their lessons outside the classroom. She agrees that teachers should model the strategies they intend to introduce in the classroom. She also believes that these strategies should be taught explicitly. However, students are free to use them or to use their own. Teachers, in her opinion, should intervene while students are utilizing these strategies to be sure they are using effective ones which are used properly. She suggests that teachers should correct students' errors immediately if the these errors are related to the focus of the lesson. When the researcher asked her, "Do you think students



should evaluate the strategies they use in terms of effectiveness" her response was, " it is difficult to do that because students vary in the strategies they use and what is effective with one student may not be with another." She thinks that it would be useful if teachers discussed the strategies they intended to teach with their students. She discusses the strategies she intends to introduce with her students but not always with her colleagues.

Ms. G

Ms. G holds an MA in Language and Literature and has been teaching English for 13 years. She teaches Literature courses, Translation and Communication Skills. She varies the methods of teaching according to the course she is teaching. In her opinion the best method is the one that meets needs and that helps students to learn. She agrees that students should work in groups and less able students should benefit from more able peers. However, they should not depend on them passively. For Ms. G it is important to know students the learning strategies that students use in order to find out whether they match up with her own teaching strategies. She does not agree that students fail to use learning strategies if they are left alone. She thinks it is valuable to encourage students to work in groups. She is of the opinion that encouraging students to discuss the learning strategies openly is helpful and lets them become more aware of these strategies. Ms. G always encourages her students to review their lessons in group outside their classroom. She thinks that teachers should model the strategies they intend to introduce in the class. In her opinion, learning strategies should be taught, but students should be given the freedom to use them at their direction or indeed to use according to their own choice. She argues that teachers should be understanding of students' errors. She rarely discusses with her students the strategies she intends to teach. She never discusses the topic of learning strategies with her colleagues either.

Dr. H

Dr. H holds a PhD in Translation. He has been teaching English for 26 years. At present he teaches Translation courses and General English. He chooses the method of teaching according to the situation. For him mixed methods can be considered as the best method. In his opinion group work suits the Arab culture. He believes that it is important to know the learning strategies that students employ. He does not agree with those who argue that students to do not employ learning strategies on their own. He thinks that

students should be encouraged to discuss with each other the learning strategies they use to be aware of them. Dr. H considers modeling strategies in the class as a good idea. He is also of the opinion that learning strategies should be explicitly taught, however, students should be free to use the strategies they prefer. Teachers may intervene as a way of guiding students without imposing on them certain strategies. With regards to students' errors and mistakes, he thinks teachers should be tolerant. He sometimes discusses with his students the learning strategies they use or those which he intends to introduce to the class. He never does so with his colleagues.

Mr. I

Mr. I holds an MA in Linguistics and an MA in Literature. He has been teaching English for 18 years. He teaches linguistic courses and general English at present. He said he does not follow a specific method of teaching. Like many other teachers in the department he stated that he used a combination of methods depending on the course he is teaching. He also thinks that there is no such method which can be labeled 'the best method'. According to Mr. I, it is the teacher's responsibility to make a method work effectively. Mr. I believes group work can be useful if management of the classroom is well maintained. Mr. I does not consider it necessary to know the students' learning strategies. However, he thinks that students do not use any learning strategies of their own accord. In Mr. I's opinion, it is essential to encourage group work and to help students exchange strategies with one other. He confirmed that he usually tells students to review their lessons outside the classrooms, especially those who live together in the university accommodation. When he was asked whether he agrees that teachers should model in class the learning strategies they would like their students to use, he answered positively. Mr. I is not of the opinion that learning strategies are to be taught explicitly. Like many other teachers, in his opinion, teachers should be tolerant of students' errors and mistakes and should offer guidance in the form of error correction. Mr. I discusses the strategies used neither with his students nor with his colleagues.

Dr. J

Dr. J is a female teacher who holds a PhD in Literature. She has been teaching English for 20 years. At present she teaches Literature courses and General English. She usually uses combination of methods depending on the course she teaches and the

standard of her students. In her opinion there is a method that can be labeled as the best method. For Dr. J, thinks that a mixed group, which enables less able students to receive assistance from more able ones, is useful. She thinks it is important for teachers to know the learning strategies that their students use. She claims that students use their own learning strategies alone without being specifically taught them, but that they may use ineffective ones such as translating from Arabic into English. Dr. J does not consider it to be important for students to discuss the learning strategies they use with one other. She encourages her students to work in groups and review their lessons outside the classroom, especially those who live in university accommodation.

According to Dr. J, teachers should not model the strategies in the classroom as she thinks. As she claims, learning strategies should not be taught explicitly. Students, in her opinion, use their own learning strategies and teachers may intervene while students are employing them in order to ascertain that they are using them effectively and efficiently. In terms of students' errors, she, like some of her colleagues, allows the students to correct themselves. If they fail to do so, she intervenes. Students can evaluate the strategies they use by themselves to find whether they are effective. Sometimes she discusses with her students the strategies they use, but she never does so with other colleagues.

Chapter Six presented the findings and analysis of the data collected employing the mixed methods approach. The discussion and interpretation of these findings will be presented in Chapter Seven.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Discussion of the Results**

The key purpose of this chapter is to discuss the interpretations and significance of the results and the findings of the study presented in Chapter Six with reference to the research questions. The results of the study are discussed with reference to previous research studies carried out by other researchers in the field of Applied Linguistics. Although this is a difficult point because it is not an easy task to find similar research in the detailed manner of this study, besides, different authors view learning strategies from different angles and they define them differently as well. Chamot (1987:71) claimed that learning strategies have been classified differently in second language domain which makes comparing strategies reported difficult. The first section (Section 7.1) discusses the teachers' perceptions of their students' frequency use of learning strategies. Section 7.2 covers the role of teachers' intervention in helping students to utilize learning strategies. The focus of Section 7.3 is the role of ZPD and how students help each other. Sections 7.4 and 7.5 cover the impact of language proficiency and students' culture and social interactions have on employing language learning strategies.

As stated in Chapter One, this study explores the impact of teaching methods on the use of learning strategies by learners in a foreign language context. The researcher reiterates that he neither compares language teaching methods, nor evaluates them. He only intends to describe the extent to which these methods can encourage or hinder the use of these strategies. As evidenced in literature review in Chapter Two, there are many definitions of language learning strategies and there is no consensus among scholars about them. The researcher, as stated earlier, adopts Oxford's (1990) definition as she offers a more complementary perception in his opinion. In Chapter Two, the researcher states that there are many variables affecting the use of language learning strategies by language learners. These variables include gender, motivation, learning styles and language proficiency. Moreover, students can benefit from each other and more able students can provide scaffolding for less able ones as claimed by SCT theorists. Studying the relationship between these variables and the learning strategies and exploring the role of Vygotsky's ZPD in enhancing learning have been the foci of research on language

learning strategies. Examples of these studies are Ehrman and Oxford (1989), Macaro (2001) and (2006), Oxford and Schramm (2007) and Chamot et al (2011).

This chapter will discuss the language strategies frequently used by the students participated in the study as self reported. It will also discuss the impact of language proficiency and will also discuss how learners benefit from operating in the ZPD when they receive the help needed to accomplish learning tasks from teachers and more able students. The last section (Section 7.6) provides a brief summary of the chapter.

### ***7.1 Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Frequently Use of LLS***

The first research question investigated was to what extent teachers perceive students' frequency of use of LLS. To probe this question the researcher distributed a questionnaire and conducted an interview to some selected teachers at the Department of Foreign Language, English Section as mentioned in Chapter Six.

As described in Section 6.4.1 there was a small difference between students' perception and teachers' perceptions of LLS. Both teachers and students ranked memory strategies high. This is in line with the syllabus that encourages cognitive strategies that require students to simply memorize the language. According to the World Bank development report about Middle East and North Africa (MENA) cited in Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi (2011), education in these countries has been criticized for emphasizing memorizing facts and definitions. In other words the focus in these countries is on passive reception and on declarative knowledge rather than procedural knowledge. Hence students adopt memory strategies. It is noticeable that the rank of memory strategies employed by the TG was not changed after the TG was taught. They may be as stated earlier attributed to the syllabus and as a result of rote learning they used to since childhood when they were 'forced' to memorize the Holy Quran, Prophet Mohammed's (Peace be upon Him) sayings and Arabic poetry and classical Arabic prose, e.g. speeches of renowned Arab orators at school.

In a study carried out by Griffiths and Parr (2001) memory strategies were found to be the least frequently used as ranked by students who were themselves speakers of other languages but in a different context (New Zealand). These findings may support the above claim. In the same study, however, teachers ranked the memory strategies as the most frequently used.

The researcher does not criticize memory strategies as enhancing learning. Memory strategies when adopted properly are useful and helpful. As asserted by Oxford (1990a) memory strategies help students store in their memory the essential things that they read or listen in the target language which may help them expand the base of their knowledge. Moreover, the information stored can be retrieved when needed for comprehension or for production.

Regarding cognitive strategies, TG ranked them at the bottom, while the CG ranked them fifth at the beginning of the semester. It was not the same at the end of the semester. Surprisingly, it headed the list of strategies by the CG and shifted a little by the TG. This diversity in ranking the cognitive strategies between the two groups may be attributed to the fact that the TG was encouraged to use other strategies, while the CG was left alone on their own. As assured by O'Malley and Chamot (1990:8) cognitive strategies in spite of being important tools in enhancing learning they should be paired by metacognitive strategies because in their opinions, students without these strategies are considered as learners without direction or have no chance to plan their learning, display their improvement, or appraise their endeavors and their future road maps.

Therefore, it may be safe to say the TG was benefited from the learning strategies instruction because as indicated in Chapter Six cognitive strategies shifted from the bottom to the fourth. Teachers rank these strategies as the third important strategies (3.86). Still there is a mismatch between students' and teachers' perceptions. Interestingly, cognitive strategies were ranked forth in Griffiths and Parr's study by the students and ranked second to top by teachers.

The next strategies are compensation strategies. These, as explained by Oxford (1990:47), enable students to use the target language to either comprehend or produce in spite of the limitations in knowledge. The descriptive statistics reveal that students do not resort to these strategies frequently. Even the TG, after being taught, still ranked them as the third important strategies. This may be attributed to the fact that these students rarely use the target language outside the classrooms. This may explain why there is no mismatch between the way teachers and students view these strategies.

Another group of strategies that illustrate the diversity of the way teachers and students view is the metacognitive strategies. While these strategies head the list of

learning strategies by both groups (TG, M = 3.60 and CG, M = 3.55), teachers rank them at the bottom (M = 1.3). As the statistic description reveals, these students coordinate their own learning process and they are able to arrange and plan their learning. These findings although they are in contrast with several studies reported by Oxford (1990a), are almost similar to Griffiths and Parr's. Oxford points out that in several studies relating to second/foreign language learning, students used metacognitive studies less frequently than cognitive strategies. Griffiths and Parr (2001) found that students ranked metacognitive strategies second to the top, while teachers ranked them second to bottom. Similarly, in this study teachers ranked them at the bottom.

As suggested by Wenden (2001), since these students frequently use metacognitive strategies, teachers should be aware of the rationale underlying their students' approach to language learning. They should try to find out why they choose to learn in certain ways and what learning strategies they prefer and also how these students approach and complete language learning tasks.

The fifth strategies that this study has investigated are the affect strategies. These strategies were ranked at the bottom, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> (TG and CG respectively) at the beginning of the semester, and 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> (TG and CG respectively) at the end of the semester. Similarly, they were ranked low by the teachers, i.e. the fifth. The infrequent use of affective learning strategies may be attributed to students' cultures. As suggested by Oxford (1996:248), the cultural background of students' beliefs and attitudes influence their motivation and consequently their use of learning strategies and eventually their language performance could be affected. Also as asserted by Finkbeiner (2008:135) these affective factors are considered to be other essential areas of culturally impacted learner variability. As revealed by this study, both teachers and students undermine these strategies. Teachers may ignore teaching these strategies explicitly. They may focus on other strategies such as cognitive and metacognitive ones. Oxford (2002:126) asserts that as revealed by many L2 strategy studies, powerful affective and social strategies such as positive self-talk, self reward and cooperative learning are ignored. Moreover, the researcher thinks that affective strategies such as lowering one's anxiety by using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation, using music and using laughter

(Oxford:1990) seem to be culture related. Therefore, it is not surprising that these strategies, especially the affective ones to be ranked low by these conservative students.

In Griffiths and Parr's study a similar ranking occurred. The affective strategies were ranked second to bottom by students and bottom by teachers (2001:252).

Other learning strategies this study tried to probe are social strategies. There is a great difference between teachers' and students' perceptions regarding social strategies. Teachers rank them as the second most frequently used, while students rank them almost at the bottom. This mismatch between teachers and students' perceptions is not uncommon. As stated by Hawkey (2006) research focuses on the differences between the perceptions of language learners and teachers because there may be conflicting views between them. There was also a mismatch between teachers and students' perceptions regarding social strategies in Griffiths and Parr's study, in which students ranked them at the top while teachers ranked them the third. These different opinions in the current study may be attributed to the fact that, teachers being non-Omanis, do not know the social aspects of their students.

To encourage using social strategies which are interpersonal process as asserted by Oxford (1990a), the researcher includes in his Teacher's Guide (Appendix) group work for more able students to offer help to less able ones operating on their zone of proximal development. This goes in line with Lantolf's (2001:145) claim that learners need to be understood as people and their human agency should be recognized. According to Activity Theory, teachers need to organize their students learning activity as interaction and cooperation (Giest and Lompscher: 3003). By following the Activity Theory and implementing the zone of proximal development and the idea of scaffolding, teachers may help students employ social strategies. However, it may be noticed that students' frequency use of social strategies was not influenced by teaching them these strategies. This may be attributed to the fact that teachers' think that students are already familiar with these strategies as their views reveal and therefore, did not focus much on them. Or it may be attributed to the fact that many students and maybe their teachers are not aware of the prospective of affective and social strategies (Oxford, 1996: xi).

Although the majority of students are females, they use social strategies less frequently as reported by the students. This finding contrasts previous studies. For



example, Nyikos (2008) argues that females prefer social strategies which stress communication such as being in study groups and practicing with native speakers. She also thinks that females have more complicated and tightly web of social interactions, therefore, they tend to socially interact and practice strategies in groups. This may not be true in Omani female students who come from conservative societies. The implication that this mismatch between teachers' and learners' perceptions may have on the learning of English, invites further research.

### ***7.2 How do Teachers Help Learners to Utilize Learning Strategies and Shift from Ineffective to the Most Effective Ones?***

The second research question is to probe how teachers offer help for students in utilizing learning strategies. The researcher interviewed ten teachers from the Department of Foreign Languages, English Language Section to find how they may perceive LLS and how they encourage students use them.

As discussed in the literature review, the most essential concept of sociocultural view is the fact that the human mind is mediated as asserted by Lantolf (2000). Language is one of the tools used in mediating human mind. Learning strategies also are considered to be used as mediators students may use to enhance their learning. The researcher by proposing a model to teach LLS explicitly aims at convincing teachers to put these LLS as mediating tools in the hand of students and show them how to be used effectively and then withdraw themselves when students are able to use them appropriately as a result of scaffolding rendered.

The purpose of this section is to interpret and discuss the oral interview carried out by the researcher to investigate the English language teachers' perceptions of their students' LLS. It is important to know teachers' methods of teaching because teachers may choose their methods of teaching according to their perceptions of students learning. As stated by Oxford (1990b), some teaching methods implemented by some teachers may influence the way students choose their language learning strategies. For example, Grammar Translation Method may encourage memorization and rote learning. From teachers' responses it was obvious that many teachers do not follow specific methods of teaching. They stated that they usually use a combination of methods which are based on their own beliefs and experience.

For example professor A stated that he may change his method according to the situation and the needs of the learners and the course he teaches. This approach goes in line with Griffiths (2008:263) who believes that in stead of keeping strictly to one or other method, current approaches lean to be flexible. From professor A's responses it was obvious that he encourages group work and that he encourages more able students to help the less able ones. He tries to be aware of the learning strategies his students use. Similarly, Mr. B does not follow a specific method of teaching. He claimed to use a combination of methods due to the course he teaches. This teacher does not see it is important to know the learning strategies his students use. In spite of that he thinks students may not use any learning strategies when they are left alone. In the researcher's point of view, it is important for the teachers to be aware of students' LLS in order to help them. How can a teacher help their students be aware of the importance of using language learning strategies consciously to make their learning faster, easier, more productive, and more interesting as suggested by (Oxford: 2002)?

A teacher who is not aware of the strategies his/her students use may not be able to guide their students to use and employ effective LLSs. To implement the work of Vygotsky, i.e. in social learning which requires the teacher to direct their students at the start and to withdraw himself/herself as the student develops more LLS (Oxford and Leaver: 1996), teachers need to be aware of their students LLSs.

Although Mr. B encourages students to discuss the strategies they use with each other, which may help them to be conscious of the strategies they use, he never discusses with his students the strategies they employ. Moreover, he thinks that teachers should be tolerant towards students' errors.

In spite of some negative attitudes towards learning strategies instruction these two teachers show, their approaches and methods of teaching may have positive effect on students' use of learning strategies

Dr C who is specialized in Applied Linguistics and who prefers CLT has a negative opinion regarding group work inside the classroom. She thinks group work does not suit Omani culture because less able students may passively depend on the more able ones. In this way this teacher virtually contrasts with the idea of ZPD, which is an interaction in doing a task between a more able peer and a less able one, as indicated by

Chaiklin (2003:41). This interaction between students is very important in my point of view. They may exchange ideas and benefit from each other, for example, a learner may not be able to use a strategy by himself/herself, and may seek assistance from a more capable peer. Therefore, this approach of teaching may have negative effect on the way learners learn and use learning strategies. Such views may discourage social strategies. However, she does not mind encouraging students to review their lessons outside the classroom in groups. Although she thinks it is important for teachers to be aware of their students' use of learning strategies, she is not sure whether encouraging students to discuss the strategies they use with each other is useful. A good point about this teacher is that she thinks teachers should model the strategies they intend to teach in the classroom for students to see how they are implemented. She is very much of the opinion that learning strategies to be taught explicitly on condition that students are not forced to use certain learning strategies, but to be given freedom whatsoever they feel suitable to their styles.

In terms of learners' errors, she thinks that teachers should give feedback on regular basis. Giving negative feedback is a controversy topic as claimed by Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994:465). Regardless of her negative opinion about group work, she can be of some help in teaching learning strategies and her method of teaching can have positive impact on language learning strategies employed by students in this context of foreign language.

Dr D who is specialized in Linguistics prefers CLT and Task-Based teaching methods; however, he usually uses a combination of methods as the situations require. He encourages mixed group in order for less able students receive assistance from more able ones. This way he encourages ZPD notion. Moreover, he is of the opinion that teachers should be aware of their students LLSs and thinks that students may use their own learning strategies but teachers' intervention is necessary lest students may use inappropriate ones. In his opinion, learning strategies should not be taught explicitly, but teachers may intervene when he/she thinks a student is using a strategy inappropriately or not effectively.

In terms of students' error, he usually encourages them to correct their errors by themselves; otherwise he does it by himself. In spite of his negative opinion regarding

language learning strategies explicit instruction, his method of teaching may have positive impact on the use of learning strategies.

Mr. E who holds an MA in linguistics does not follow a specific method and he chooses his method of teaching according to the course he teaches and does not believe in the so called 'best method'. Since students use a variety of learning strategies, he thinks it is not important for teachers to know them. He encourages group work and also encourages his students to discuss with each other the strategies they use. Mr. E agrees that LLSs to be taught explicitly and teachers could model the strategies they intend to introduce in front of the class room for students to know how they work. With regard to students' errors, he thinks that they should be corrected immediately either by students themselves or by the teacher. The approach of this colleague is also helpful and it may have positive impact on the use of learning strategies.

Dr F who holds PhD in Applied Linguistics prefers CLT but does not stick to it all the time. Although she thinks CLT is considered to be the best method, she thinks that teacher should adjust their methods according to the situations. She thinks group work is valuable but using it depends on the context and should be implemented accordingly. In her opinion, more able students should be instructed to help less able ones. She postulated that knowing what strategies students employ is essential. She argues that poor students use a narrow range of strategies and what they use may be ineffective. This claim contrasts with what has been found out by some researchers; for example, (Abraham and Vann: 1987), stated that less successful learners use learning strategies as more frequently as the more successful learners, but they may use them in a different way. Dr. F despite her encouragement of group work inside the classroom does not see the same outside the classroom. With regards to students' errors, she thinks they should be corrected immediately especially, if the errors related to the focus of the lesson. She has positive opinions about learning strategies. Dr. F's views and method of teaching are helpful and may have positive impact on the use of learning strategies.

Ms. G, who holds an MA in literature, does not follow a specific method of teaching either, but varies her methods according to the course she teaches. She advocates group work on condition that less able students should not depend passively on the more able ones. In the researcher's point of view she is right in her precaution. In

order to overcome this passivity the researcher suggests the implementation of scaffolding and the ZPD. For example, language learning strategies can be used as mediation for learning English properly. Therefore, less able students can be mediated by more successful ones who may operate on their ZPD and provide necessary scaffolding and then withdraw at the right moment when the less able ones are able to use the learning strategies properly. Ms G thinks it is important for teachers to know his/her students LLSs to find out whether they match with his/her teaching strategies and with students' learning style. In her opinion, it is important to encourage students to work in group and to teach LLSs explicitly on condition that they will be given freedom to choose what they think suit their own learning styles. As far as students' errors are concerned, she thinks that teachers should be tolerant. She rarely discusses with her students the strategies she intends to introduce and never does this with her colleagues.

Ms G has positive opinions about LLSs and her approach and methods of teaching may have positive impact on the teaching of LLSs.

Dr. H holds PhD in translation. He also chooses the method of teaching according to the situation. He advocates teaching LLSs explicitly and thinks it is important to encourage students discuss with each other the strategies that they employ. Moreover, he thinks that modeling strategies in front of the classroom is a good idea. He sometimes discusses students LLSs with them but never discusses these strategies with his colleagues. Therefore, his views and method of teaching may influence positively the use of LLSs.

Mr. I who holds an MA in linguistics and an MA in literature has been teaching English for 18 years. He also does not follow a specific method of teaching, and like his colleagues varies his methods according to the situations. He thinks group work may be useful if the class management is guaranteed. Although he thinks, it is not important to know students' learning strategies; he thinks students may not use LLS on their own. He encourages his students to review their lessons outside the classroom together. He thinks teachers can model learning students to the students to know how they should implemented, but he contradicts himself by saying that LLS should not be taught explicitly. Like many other of his colleagues, he neither discusses learning strategies with his students, nor with other teachers.

It seems that Mr. I has negative attitudes towards language learning instruction. His methods of teaching may have negative impact on the use of learning strategies.

Dr. J, a female teacher, holds a PhD in literature. She also does not follow a specific method in teaching. For her group work is useful and can be productive. In her opinion, teachers should be aware of their students learning strategies. She is of the opinion that language learning strategies should not be taught explicitly. She may discuss with her students about the LLS that they use but does this with her colleagues.

Although Dr. J has negative attitudes towards explicit teaching of LLS, her method of teaching may not have negative impact on the use of LLS.

The above presentation and discussion show that the views and methods of these teachers in general may have positive impact on students' use of LLSs. It is claimed that reconfiguring the language classroom culture can help language learning strategies to grow and develop (Donato and McCormick: 1994). However, these findings may not be generalized. Therefore, the researcher can not claim that this is true at all universities in Oman because the population of the study does not represent all who teach elsewhere in Oman or outside.

### ***7.3 The Role of Proficiency in Employing Language Learning Strategies***

This section discusses the effect of proficiency on the frequency use of language learning strategies and answers the research question: What is the effect of language proficiency on employing language learning strategies? Considerable studies find correlation between proficiency and the use of language learning strategies, for example, Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995), Schmidt et al (1996). These authors find the English language proficiency to be the most important factor in using LLSs. Different authors explored the effect of English proficiency on the use of language learning strategies in a different way. For example, Oxford et al (2004) investigated how task difficulty and proficiency level impact the reported frequency of strategy utilized by language learners. Oxford and Ehrman (1995) explored the relation between language learning strategies and different factors including proficiency level among adult learners. Carhill et al (2008) explored the factors that account for English language proficiency among adolescent of the first generation immigrant students of different countries. The current study aimed at exploring the effect of English language proficiency on language learning strategies

employed by students in a foreign language context and whether the language proficiency affects or affected by the teaching methods.

Research question 3 explored the effect of language proficiency on the use of language learning strategies at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester of the two groups: TG and CG.

### ***7.3.1 The Effect of Language Proficiency on the Memory Strategy Used by the two***

The box-plot in Figure 1.2 revealed the higher the grade, the more frequency students of the TG use memory strategies and vice versa. It showed dissimilarity between the high achievers and low achievers. After teachers intervention some different variations were noticed across the TOEFL grades, especially among those who scored 450-500. By using ANOVA, the researcher confirmed that there was a statistically significant difference across the groups. This may go in line with the researcher's claim that if the zone of proximal development implemented appropriately within its theoretical bases, it may help in language learning strategies. According to the Teacher's Guide, students were encouraged to work together, especially the more able ones were asked to help the less able ones and then after providing the necessary scaffolding to withdraw themselves. It may be claimed that the high proficiency learners benefited from the instruction and developed their learning strategies far better than the low proficiency learners. This is not uncommon among second language learners. Fewell (2010:159) claims that the randomization of LLS adoption by both successful and unsuccessful learners has provided insight into understanding the influence and enormous potential of this SLA variable. Similarities in patterns of LLS utilization among high proficiency learners and differences shared by low proficiency learners suggest this variable is a significant determinant of eventual success or failure in language learning.

Figure 1.2.1 reveals the impact of language proficiency on the memory strategies employed by the CG at the beginning of the semester. It can be noticed that with this group, the higher the TOEFL grade, the more frequently they used the strategies. Figure 1.3 shows some slight difference between the beginning and end of the semester, which is between the high graders and low graders. This may be explained in the following manner. The high graders seemed to be benefited from the teaching methods and from the group work. The low achievers also seemed to be able more effectively the memory strategies as the result of the scaffolding they received from the teachers and the more able ones.

### ***7.3.2. The Effect of English Proficiency on the Use of Cognitive Strategies by the Two groups.***

The box-plot was used to compare the two groups; TG and CG at the beginning of the semester, some variations were found between the two groups but the difference was not so large as to distort the group means. However, at the end of the semester, the box-plot revealed significant difference between the two groups which could be the result of teachers' intervention and the help that the less able ones received from the more able ones in using the cognitive strategies more effectively. Referring back to the statistical tools used revealed that at the beginning of the semester the TG scored  $M = 3.358$ , and  $SD = .51$  by high achievers,  $M = 3.21$ ,  $SD = .45$  by medium achievers and  $M = 3.20$ ,  $SD = .44$  by the low group. At the end of the semester, there were some changes. For example, the high grader scored  $M = 3.91$  and  $SD = .24$ , the medium graders scored  $M = 3.21$ ,  $SD = .25$  and the low graders scored  $M = 3.75$ ,  $SD = .25$ .

This study based on the cognitive perspective and the Vygotskian sociocultural theory on the mediating role of learning strategies and the intervention of teachers and help provided by more able peers. The findings above seemed to reveal the advantage of the instruction of learning strategies and it is possible that students benefit from each other and it appeared that they successfully exchanged cognitive strategies from each other. In terms of microgenetic observation, it is possible that the marked differences in using cognitive strategies between the beginning of the semester and the end of the semester were because of the scaffolding students received from their teacher and from the more able peers.

These findings matched with Oxford and Ehrman's (1995:372) argument that the cognitive strategies positively correlate with language proficiency. However it contrasted with their own study which found low correlation between cognitive strategies and language proficiency. They explained the reasons why the correlation was low such as "restricted range of proficiency outcomes and/or the restricted range of strategy use scores (moderately strong)."



#### ***7.4. The effect of English Proficiency on the Use of Compensation Strategies***

The discussion of this section is on the impact of language proficiency on the use of compensation strategies to find out whether students benefited from teaching these strategies and from the interaction with other class mates operating on the zone of proximal development.

##### ***7.4.1 Box-plot of The Effect of English Proficiency on Compensation Strategies***

Due to the individual differences among students it is not surprising to find differences in the mean distributions between the two groups; TG and CG. At the beginning of the semester there was a slight difference between TOEFL grade scores across the two groups. The students in the two groups were classified as high, medium and low achievers. It can be noticed that the medium achievers have the widest distribution. The box-plot revealed some slight differences between the TOEFL grades at the end of the semester which may be attributed to the teachers' intervention and the help received from more able students.

The discussion above showed that students were no longer passive recipients but there were interactions among the learners and ideas were exchanged and learning strategies utilized. the Teacher's Guide suggested by the researcher to introduce critical pedagogy (CP) to change the way traditional teaching viewed teaching itself and also to change the traditional relation between teachers and learners.

The microgenetic process may be explained within the framework of Activity Theory, a concept which was developed by Leontiev based on Vygotsky's ideas as claimed by Donato and McCormick (1994). The learning strategies introduced by the teacher could be considered as actions and tools which were oriented to fulfill specific goals, i.e. to learn and be able to do the tasks assigned by the teacher properly and may be in group.

##### ***7.4.2. Means and Standard Deviations of Proficiency of Compensation Strategies:***

The results of ANOVA showed significant variations in the utilization of compensation strategies at the beginning of the semester but these variations were not found at the end of the semester.

In this study, English proficiency had no effect on the compensation strategies, which are used to enable learners to use the target language for either comprehension or

production in spite of their limitations in knowledge. This is probably because students were mediated either by their teacher or by a more able peer. Therefore, these students do not need to resort to compensation strategies since help was ready at hand. This may go in line with Oxford and Ehrman's (1995) claim, the users of compensation strategies are inclined to be very flexible, sensible, and could deal productively with unusual practices. Therefore a tentative conclusion may be that the participants did not resort to compensation strategies because the help needed was available from the teacher or from the more able peer and these strategies might be used in the out-class activities.

#### ***7.4.3 Box-plot of The Effect of English Proficiency on the Metacognitive Strategies:***

Figure 5 of box-plot in Chapter Six revealed the wide range of TOEFL scores between the three groups of students, i.e. high, medium and low achievers. This is not surprising because of the individual differences between the students. Before the TG was taught the natural discrepancies between the groups were obvious. During the treatment the TG students were mediated by learning strategies and scaffolding was provided by the teacher and the more able classmates. Figure 5.1 (Box-plot) in Chapter Six revealed some differences between the three groups at the end of the semester. These differences and improvements could be attributed to the mediation of language learning strategies and scaffolding received. As claimed by Donato and McCormick (1994:453) sociocultural theory sustains that socially interacted institutions such as schools, classrooms and so on have essential parts to play in the cognitive growth and development of any individual.

#### ***7.4.4. Means and Standard Deviations of Proficiency of Metacognitive Strategies:***

As stated by Oxford (1990a) metacognitive strategies are very important for those who seek success in language learning. These students ranked metacognitive strategies at the top. However, teachers ranked them at the bottom believing that students do not use them frequently.

ANOVA results indicated that English proficiency had its effect on the use of learning strategies. At the beginning of the semester the CG students' overall means scores were as follow:  $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = .55$  and at the end of the semester  $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = .40$ . The overall means scores of the TG were  $3.60$ ,  $SD .51$  at the beginning of the semester and  $4.05$ ,  $SD .39$  at the end of the semester. It is surprising that the effect of

English proficiency was more obvious at the beginning of the semester. The effect decreased at the end of the semester. It is possible that all students improved their learning strategies including metacognitive ones; therefore, the discrepancies between the students disappeared. This way the effect of English proficiency seemed to decrease. This is not the only study that found low correlation between English language proficiency and a sub-skill of learning strategies. For example, Oxford and Ehrman (1995) found low correlation between English proficiency and cognitive strategies. According to their speculation, not all strategies can be learned similarly, some strategies may be easily learned and others may not.

It is very important as noticed by Griffiths and Parr (2001:243) for teachers to increase their awareness of their students' learning strategies and requirements in order to help them utilize their strategies. Teachers also need to train students use learning strategies effectively. As noticed by Oxford (1990a) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) strategy training is essential for students to improve the use of language learning strategies. These learning strategies may be used as mediation to facilitate learning. This way, teachers can embrace critical pedagogy and help their students to participate actively in the classroom.

#### ***7.4.5 The effect of English Proficiency on the Use of Affective Strategies***

The discussion of this section is on the impact of language proficiency on the use of affective strategies to find out whether students benefit from teaching these strategies and from the interaction with other class mates operating on the zone of proximal development. Since this study is grounded on sociocultural theory, the discussion sheds light on students' interactions in the classroom and to what extent they benefit from each other and from the teacher's method implemented.

#### ***7.4.6 Box-plot of The Effect of English Proficiency on the Affective Strategies:***

Figure 5.1 in Chapter 6 revealed that medium and high achievers in the two groups reported using affective strategies at the beginning of the semester virtually in the same way. The low achievers, however, had the lowest grades. At the end of the semester the students utility of the affective groups became different which may be attributed to the teacher's intervention and scaffolding received from both the more able peers and from the teacher by the TG.

#### ***7.4.7. Means and Standard Deviations of Proficiency of affective Strategies:***

One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results clarified this further. At the beginning of the semester, high graders scores were  $M = 3.37$ ,  $SD = .61$ . Medium graders scored  $M = 3.32$ ,  $SD = .59$  while low graders scored  $M = 3.30$   $SD = .47$ .

The above section discussed the effect of language proficiency on the use of learning strategies. In this study the language proficiency was considered as a moderating variable because it was hypothesized to increase or decrease the impact of teaching methods on the use of learning strategies. Therefore, the most important contribution that this study provides is that students' language proficiency may increase or decrease the impact of teaching methods on the use of learning strategies. This study encourages teachers to be aware of their learners' language level. The more proficient students use more frequently learning strategies. These proficient ones can help the less proficient peers in utilizing learning strategies by providing scaffolding when necessary and then withdraw themselves when the low proficient students are able to use these strategies alone.

However, as pointed out by Oxford and Ehrman (1995) one should be cautious about such findings that come from a small population that do not represent different groups. They suggested that to be more conscientious about such relation between English proficiency and the use of learning strategies, research should be conducted with different groups from variety of institutions such as schools, universities, government agencies and corporations.

More specifically this study suggests that teachers encourage the more able learners to help the less able ones by introducing group work and encouraging social interactions inside and outside the classroom and considering the learning strategies as a learning mediator. The findings of this study contribute to the growing concern of language learning strategies instruction in general and in the Sultanate of Oman in particular.

#### ***7.4 Learning Strategies Reported being Used by the Participants***

This section discusses the students' frequency use of language learning strategies and answers the research question: What are the language learning strategies reported being utilized by the Participants Learning English in A Foreign Language Context?

In response to the fourth research question, the findings of this research revealed that these students use learning strategies with different frequencies and that there are some learning strategies are most frequently used and others are less frequently used. It appear that cultural and social background may have some effect in using these strategies. in what follows, the six types of learning strategies and their level of frequency will be discussed based on the statistical findings. The role of the teaching methods and more able peers scaffolding will be sought. It has been hypothesized that students whose attention is turned by their teachers and peers to use a variety of learning strategies and avoid the ineffective ones become better learners and more effective (learning strategies) users than those who are left on their own.

#### ***7.4.1. Memory Strategies***

To probe the learning strategies employed by these students, two research instruments were used, box-plot and independent-sample t-test. Two questionnaires were conducted; one at the beginning of the semester and the other at the end of the semester to investigate the impact of teachers and more able peers' intervention. Two groups of students were involved. One group was used as the control group. The control group was composed of two class (70 students). These classes were taught normally by and two other classes were chosen randomly to be the treatment group (70 students). The treatment groups were taught learning strategies explicitly following a Teacher' Guide book prepared by the researcher (see Appendix). These treatment classes were taught by a professor of English and the researcher.

As demonstrated by the box-plot the two groups; the CG and TG were not identical. This is not surprising because of the individual differences between the students. The difference between the two groups was not large. Performing the independent-sample t-test demonstrates the slight differences between the two groups at the beginning of the semester. The mean and SD of the TG were  $M = 3.39$  and  $SD = .52$ . the CG scored  $M = 3.34$  and  $SD = .41$ . At the end of the semester the findings demonstrated some changes in the mean and SD scores between the groups. The TG scored  $M = 3.39$  and  $SD = .36$ , some progress was made. The CG scored  $M = 3.35$ ,  $SD = .35$  a slight progress was made.

Performing the independent-sample t-test revealed that there was no statistical difference between the two groups at the beginning of the semester. The  $p$  value (2-tailed sig.) was .522 which was more than .05. At the end of the semester the result was different, there was a statistical significant difference between the two groups. The  $p$  value was .000 which was less than .05. The magnitude of the difference was considerable large (eta squared = 0.42).

The findings may support Oxford' (1990) claim that learning strategies can be taught. It may also support the argument of Donato and McCormick (1994) that language learning strategies can be developed within sociocultural theory. The teacher's guide encourages teachers to model the strategies in front of the class, to engage students to evaluate these strategies and then they were encouraged to collaborate with each other in employing these strategies in order to reduce the difficulties less able students may encounter when they work on their own. In this case a more able student may help and provide scaffolding (other regulation) and as was directed by the teacher can withdraw himself/herself when the student is able to do the task alone (self-regulation). Moreover, students were encouraged to use these strategies outside the classroom and were given tasks that require using these strategies to be done at the hostel or at home. This was done in consistent with activity theory as suggested by Donato and McCormick (1994). Memory strategies have been employed in social interactions, under the surveillance of the teacher, not as have been practiced in memorization and rote learning activities.

#### ***7.4.2. Cognitive Strategies***

Cognitive strategies, as described by Oxford (1990a), are the second direct strategies. These strategies are highly important because they include two important types of activities: On one hand they include practice and rehearsal, and on the other hand, they involve mental techniques such as hypothesis formation and personalization (Oxford and Ehrman: 1995).

At the beginning of the semester and as demonstrated by the box-plot, the two groups were not identical, however, applying the t-test shows that the difference between the groups was not large. The TG scored as demonstrated by the independent-sample t-test  $M = 3.20$  and  $SD = .49$  and while the CG scored  $M = 3.21$  and  $SD .41$ . Therefore, the

readings of the T-test show that the difference between the two groups at the beginning of the semester was not statistically significant (See Tables 6 and 6.1 in Chapter Six).

Examining the means and SD of the two groups at the end of the semester illustrates differences between the two groups. In spite of the fact that, cognitive strategies ranked the top by the CG, it can be noticed that the means of the TG is higher. This may indicate that the TG used these strategies far better and more appropriately as a result of the instruction and the scaffolding they received. As the statistics depict, the TG scored  $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD .49$  and the CG scored  $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD .41$ . The sig. (2-tailed) was .000 which was less than  $p$  value .05. The magnitude using eta square was considerably large, that is 0.28.

The researcher argues that this statistically significant difference may be attributed to the teacher's intervention and the help of more able peers (other regulation). This may support the hypothesis that using learning strategies within sociocultural theory may benefit students. Moreover, giving students chances to interact socially in the classroom and to be treated as a social community may encourage them to learn. The researcher has chosen teaching learning strategies within the framework of sociocultural theory because it ideal to analyze classroom interaction and one of its main pillars is that cognitive development, and consequently learning takes place in a social context such as a classroom (van Lier: 1991) cited in Anton (1999). According to the same author "Interaction, participation, and negotiation create learning opportunities in the L2 classroom."

This study, compared with that of Griffiths and Parr (2001) may cast light on the role of cultural and social background. It can be noticed cognitive strategies occupied middle rank, while the students participated in this study ranked them at the top. It is possible that this difference can be attributed to culture and social behaviour or may be to the outdated methodologies and curriculum and test oriented teaching as pointed out by Syed (2003).

Therefore, the researcher may attribute this microgenetic growth illustrated by the statistic description to the introduction of language learning strategies within the framework of sociocultural framework. He considers this as a contribution of this study

to the field of Applied Linguistics in a foreign language context in general and in the Sultanate of Oman in particular.

#### ***7.4.3. Compensation Strategies***

The third direct strategies according to Oxford classification (1990a) are compensation strategies. Students ranked this almost in the middle. These findings are similar to the ones found by Griffiths and Parr (2001), in spite of the fact that the two studies were carried in a different cultural background and there were great mismatches between other strategies such as social strategies. They are different from the findings of Oxford and Ehrman (1995) who reported that these strategies were the most frequently used strategies. This mismatch may support Oxford's claim (1992) cited in Oxford and Ehrman (1995) claim that the second language learners who learn the target language in an environment where the target language is the means of communication, use more learning strategies than foreign language students who learn where the target language is not used as a means of communication as in Oman.

The finding of the box-plot revealed that the difference between the TG and the CG was not wide and it was safe to perform the t-test. At the end of the semester the box-plot indicated that the distribution of the means between the two groups was asymmetrical. The difference between the groups may illustrate that the TG was affected by the way they were taught and the scaffolding the less able students received and that they started using the learning strategies more appropriately. Referring to the results illustrated by the independent-sample t-test which demonstrated that at the beginning of the semester, the mean frequency scores of the TG were 3.35, SD =.52 and that of the CG were (mean = 3.40, DS =.57). The sig. (2-tailed) was .591 which was more than  $p$  - value .05, therefore, no statistical significance was found. On the other hand a closer look at the tables in Chapter Six depicted a statistical difference between the two groups. For example, the mean of the frequency use of compensation strategies reported by the TG students were 3.84 and SD .47 while the CG scored (M =3.34 and SD =.53). The sig. (t-tailed) was .000 which was obviously less than the  $p$ -value .05. The magnitude of the difference between the means was considerably large, which was (eta squared = 0.23).



The above findings may be attributed to the teaching method adopted in which the teacher encouraged collaborative learning and introduced learning strategies within the sociocultural framework.

#### **7.4.4. Affective Strategies**

The box-plots demonstrated that the TG and the CG were almost symmetrical and that the two boxes are almost identical at the beginning of the semester. The box-plots of the two groups are different at the end of the semester. The two boxes almost have the same size and both of them have one outlier which may be attribute to the individual differences between the students. Performing the independent-sample t-test illustrated the following data. At the beginning of the semester the frequency of mean scored by the TG group was as follow:  $M = 38$ ,  $SD = .58$  and by the CG  $M = 3.27$ ,  $SD = .55$ . at the end of the semester the results were different. The TG group scored  $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = .50$  and the CG,  $M = 3.32$ ,  $SD = .56$ . It can be noticed that both groups improved in using the affective strategies, but the TG was much better. Although the improvement can be seen among both groups, statistically as the independent-sample t-test illustrated, there was no significant difference among the CG. The sig. (2-tailed) was .279 which was more than .05. On the other hand there was a significant difference among the TG, the sig. (2-tailed) was .000, which was less than .05. In spite of this significant difference, the magnitude was moderate (eta squared = .09). This shows that in spite of the teacher's intervention and the group work, the improvement was not as it should be. The possible explanation to this may be it is difficult to change students' emotion, attitudes, motivations and values in one semester. As defined by Oxford (1990a:140) "The term *affective* refers to emotion, attitudes, motivations, and values." The teacher, in order to influence these factors and convince his/her students to use these strategies, as suggested by Oxford (1990a:140, need to do their best to influence over these factors by following three ways. They can change the social structure of the classroom and let students feel responsible. They can be entailed by introducing learning strategies in sociocultural frame work in my point of view, but it may need a long time. Also by increasing the amount of naturalistic communication and this can be introduced by introducing group work within the framework of the sociocultural theory. Finally, this goal may be achieved by training students to use affective strategies.

The contribution of this study is introducing learning strategies instruction within the cognitive and the social theory of learning, rather than exclusively presenting it within the framework of cognitive theory, as suggested by O'Malley and Chamot. Ellis (2010:30) suggests that “adopting a non-judgmental relativist position” may put the paradigm war between the two different views. Therefore, the researcher claims that by introducing the teaching of learning strategies based on these two paradigms he is tuning down the strident tone of the paradigm war.

#### ***7.4.5 Social Strategies***

The results obtained by using the research tools , box-plots Figure 6 and 6.1, independent-sample t- test, and one way ANOVA confirmed that these strategies are the least to be used by the students in this foreign language context. First the box plots (Figure 6) indicate a slight difference between the TG and CG at the beginning of the semester. This slight difference between the two groups may be normal and could be attributed to the individual differences between learners. A closer look at the two boxes shows that they are equal in size which indicate they have equal variances. On the other hand the box plots (Figure 6.1) indicated a different image. The TG group improved in terms of the means scores, almost between 3 to 4.50 while the CG remain between 2 to 4. Performing independent t-test clarified the differences and similarities in terms of means and SD. The TG means and SD of the TG at the beginning of the semester were as follow:  $M = 3.22$  and  $SD = .51$  and at the end of the semester were:  $M = 3.72$  and  $SD = .34$  and the CG scored  $M = 3.15$ ;  $SD = .60$  at the beginning of the semester and  $M = 3.27$  and  $SD = .46$ .

The box plots indicate that English proficiency has its effect on the use of social strategies. The three boxes representing the three proficiency group are not symmetrical which indicate that they have different variances. The medium and low achievers have outliers which show differences among the learners who belong to these groups. The high achievers also have longer whiskers; especially the whisker above the box is the longest, than the other two groups. The low achievers have the smallest box and the shortest whiskers which show they are the least users of social strategies. Figure 6.3 box plots show what changes took place after the treatment.

### ***7.5 The Impact of Teaching Methods on Students' Awareness of their on Learning Strategies***

This section discusses the students' awareness of their frequency use of language learning strategies and answers the research question: Would learning strategies instruction lead to awareness to learning strategies process on the part of students and would it encourage them to apply these strategies beyond the classroom?

To investigate this research question a questionnaire was conducted twice. The first time it was conducted at the beginning of the semester and the other at the end of the semester. The aim of the first questionnaire was to discover the learning strategies students use on their own, while the aim of the second questionnaire was to gauge the impact of the teaching methods on the choice and the frequency use of these strategies. Moreover, other tools were used such as interviews; students' diary and the teacher's observation were used to get an in-depth analysis. The first discussion is based on the data collected by the questionnaire.

Table 1 in Chapter Six revealed the ranking of the language learning strategies as self-reported by the two groups (CG and TG). The CG ranked metacognitive strategies at the top, compensation strategies second from the top, memory strategies third, affective strategies third from the bottom, social strategies second from the bottom and the social strategies at the bottom. On the other hand, the TG ranked metacognitive strategies at the top, similar to the CG. Compensation strategies were ranked second from the top, then affective strategies came third in ranking, social strategies came second from the bottom and cognitive strategies at the bottom.

Closer scrutiny reveals that metacognitive strategies, for both groups head the list and the social strategies virtually came at the bottom. Also cognitive strategies occupied fifth by the CG and sixth by the TG. It seems that the frequency use of the two groups, at the beginning of the semester was almost similar with the exception of compensation strategies which were ranked forth by the TG and second from the top by the CG.

This homogeneity of the strategy choice may indicate that the two groups were honest in their responses to the questionnaire and there were no exaggerated answers. These results are different from the ones reported by Griffiths and Parr (2001). In their

study, students reported memory strategies the least, social strategies as the most frequently used strategies, followed by metacognitive strategies, compensation and cognitive strategies in the middle. Affective strategies occupied a bottom rank. It is interesting that in this study and in Griffiths and Parr's study, metacognitive strategies were almost the same. It appears that the cultural background play an essential role in the choice of learning strategies; therefore, these findings may support Oxford's (1990:102) claim that "the national origin or ethnicity has a strong association with the kinds of strategies used by language learners."

At the end of the semester, almost four months from the first questionnaire was administered, another was conducted. During this time the TG were taught learning strategies explicitly, following the Teacher's Guide provided by the researcher (see Appendix), and the less able students received scaffolding from their teachers and the more able ones. The CG was not taught these strategies explicitly. Table 2 in Chapter Six depicts a clear difference between the two groups. For example, metacognitive strategies still occupied the top rank with the CG, while it was shifted to the second from the top by the TG. Memory strategies ranked second from the top by the CG and third by the TG. Cognitive strategies headed the list by the CG and ranked forth by the TG. Compensation strategies ranked forth by the CG and third by the TG. Affective and social group remain at the bottom by the two groups. It can be noticed that memory strategies remain the same by the two groups.

With regards to cognitive strategies a dramatic change occurred among the CG. It was ranked fifth by the CG at the beginning of the semester and topped the list at the end of the semester. The TG ranked them the sixth and then shifted to fourth. This dramatic change of cognitive strategies may indicate that these students who were left to choose the strategies on their own did this at the expense of other strategies such as compensation strategies. Awadh (2003) claims that cognitive strategies are the most frequently used strategies used by Omani students enrolled in the first year of Sultan Qaboos University than metacognitive strategies. In her opinion this can be attributed to the Omani syllabus and the tasks which focus on cognitive strategies.

This is why this writer emphasizes the importance of teacher's intervention and the explicit teaching of learning strategies in order to encourage students to strike a balance between all the strategies.

It can be observed that the social strategies were the least frequently used strategies by the two groups. It appears that the explicit teaching of these strategies did not change students' attitudes towards these strategies. However, one may notice some slight progress. At the beginning the mean scored was  $M = 3.22$  and at the end the mean scored raised to 3.72. This may demonstrate students' cultural and social background could have affected the choice of these strategies. To employ these strategies entail asking questions for clarification or verification. They also entail cooperation with others, either peers or users of the target language. Moreover, these strategies require empathizing with others and in terms of developing cultural understanding and becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings (Oxford: 1990). It appears that employing these strategies requires dramatic changes in beliefs and behaviour which may not be easy to occur during one semester.

Therefore, as these findings illustrate, the researcher claims that the low frequency utility of social strategies may be traced back to cultural and social background. This needs further investigation and research.

Another noticeable remark is that the affective strategies have been ranked low by both groups, at the beginning and end of the semester. This ranking may also be rooted in students' cultural and social background. Affective strategies as defined by (Oxford (1990a) demand lowering anxiety by using progressive relaxation, using music and using laughter. Furthermore, they need encouraging oneself by making positive statement, taking risk wisely and rewarding oneself. They also require taking emotional actions such as listening to one-self, using a checklist, writing a language learning diary and discussing one's feeling with someone else. As it was stated in the Introduction Chapter, these students come from a conservative society and the majority being females may be justifiable why they ranked the social and affective strategies low.

As stated by Donato and McCormick (1994) the social life of the classroom is important for use of learning strategies by individuals. They suggest that the classroom to

be viewed in a different way. Learning strategies should not be taught outside the social context of students' social environment.

The ultimate aim of training students to use the learning strategies is to help students to be able to use, adapt, assess and transfer these strategies outside the classroom to new situations and tasks as suggested by Oxford and Ehrman (1995).

To achieve this goal, the researcher links learning strategy instruction with sociocultural theory. As suggested by Donato and McCormick (1994:455) learning strategies should be used within the activity of the individual learner. The three levels of the activity should explain why the learner uses this particular strategy, how it should be carried out and finally how the situation shapes and automatizes the strategies actions.

This writer thinks one of the important contributions of this study is to introduce learning strategies within the framework of sociocultural framework in a foreign language context and the way it views the classroom as a cultural community. The researcher argues that, for the students to use the learning strategies appropriately, negative beliefs that hinder the appropriate use of learning strategies should be eliminated. For example, female students' shyness may impede their participation in the classroom activities. Others may be reluctant to ask for clarification. Generally some students avoid risks because they are influenced by expected criticism from other classmates or by self-criticism, which may astound them.

The students' diary may give the teacher a clear idea about students' progress and s/he may be aware of what hinders progress. From his own teaching experience in the TG, the researcher observed that some students were reluctant to work in groups and to receive scaffolding and assistance from more able peers and to ask other students how certain strategies were used. The researcher was able to overcome these obstacles by encouraging cooperative work and demonstrating that cooperative work is one of the Islamic heritages that Omanis are proud of.

To sum up, instructors' teaching methods adopted may have positive or negative impact on the use of learning strategies. Teachers, in order to encourage students to use learning strategies appropriately, need to be aware of their students' social and cultural background and at the same time they should pay attention to their students frequently used strategies.

### ***7.5 Scaffolding and the Zone of Proximal Development***

This section discusses to what extent students are able to operate in the zone of proximal development and answers the research question: To the extent that students are able to operate in the zone of proximal development when receiving assistance from teachers and more capable peers?

To investigate this research question, the researcher conducted interviews and asked students to keep with them a diary to write down their progress and how they benefit from the teaching of learning strategies and how they implement cooperative learning. Moreover, the researcher depends on his own observation whilst teaching his students.

#### ***7.5.1. The Interview***

The most interesting finding of the students' interviews was that their findings were not different from the questionnaires. Students confirmed using the learning strategies they reported using in their self-report questionnaire. It was noticed that the students were able to describe the strategies they use. The interviews revealed that there is a big difference among the students in the way they perceive learning strategies and their preferences. The most common thing is their focus on vocabulary and grammar. Most of those who were interviewed think that if they knew grammar and a lot of vocabulary they would be good at English. This belief may be as the result of the impact of the way they were taught. As discussed in the literature review many teachers in Oman, still adopt the traditional ways of teaching. Or possibly those who taught them were affected by Chomsky's (1965) claim, cited in Canale and Swain (1980), that "competence is associated exclusively with knowledge of rules of grammar,..." Although CLT is a method assigned by the Ministry of Education, still some teachers avoid using it, either because it may need a lot of effort from the teacher or maybe because it takes a lot from the status of the teacher, and possibly because it does not prepare students to the traditional examination formats as discussed in literature review Chapter Four.

Another important point one may notice is the dependence of students on the teacher. They want any thing ready from the teacher (spoon-feeding). The researcher

believes a radical change is needed in students' beliefs and attitudes and their perceptions of learning.

Unfortunately some less able students think of a group work and scaffolding as merely being helped while they sit passively in a spoon-feeding manner.

Another strategies which preferred by many, especially less able ones, as the interview revealed was the resort to translation and their insistence on using the bilingual dictionary. This may indicate that these students' focus is always on the sentence level and on the vocabulary rather than concentrating on the ideas and the deep structures of sentences. It is noticed that many of them reported that they keep notebooks to write downs lists of words mainly with Arabic translation and grammatical rules. As discussed in the literature review this is one of the characteristics of Grammar-Translation Method. This fact may support the hypothesis that teaching methods impact students' way of learning and hence their choice of learning strategies. Another important point that the interviews illustrated was the fact that many of these students prefer working alone which may be associated with their culture or with their learning styles. This matter needs to be investigated further.

### ***7.6 Students' Diary***

Students' diaries revealed a lot of information to the researcher. In terms of writing skills they illustrated that students need a lot of practice in this skill. A considerable amount of grammatical and structural errors were made. Still their style in writing is influenced by their mother tongue that is to say, it is obvious that they think in Arabic and write in English. Despite paying much attention to grammar and they fail to use it in writing correctly which may indicate that they apply rote learning in memorizing grammatical rule without being able to use them. This also may support the fact that these students were influenced by Grammar-Translation method being used by some teachers in their earlier stages of schooling.

Students through their diaries confirmed using the same learning strategies they already reported suing. The diaries proved that students are aware of the strategies they are using and also these diaries may support that teaching of learning strategies increased students' awareness of these strategies and helped them to use these strategies effectively.



Learning strategies, when used within the framework of sociocultural and cognitive theories may be more efficient and welcomed by both teachers and learners. Furthermore, the diaries may account for the microgenetic development of students during the semester or during a lecture which may help teachers to trace their students' progress.

### ***7.8 Researcher's Observation***

The focus of the observations was the university students studying English 2. These students belonged to different colleges at the university, e.g. Pharmacy, Nursing, Engineering, Arabic Language and English Language. Their level of English varies from high, medium to low according to TOEFL exam scores. The duration of the observations was almost for one hour twice a week for about four months. What follows is interpretation and discussion of the observations.

The structured observations carried out clearly assisted the researcher to see by himself how students use learning strategies and how they help each other. Moreover, the researcher was able to see how the students operate on their own zone of proximal development and how they ask for help or offer help. The researcher has noticed that some students were keen to ask and learn as much as they could from the more able ones. However, some others still relied heavily on the teacher, many times they used to call for the teacher to clarify a point or to explain the meaning of a 'difficult' word or, while writing they may ask about an English word for this word or so.

The observation focused on the way students used learning strategies based on Oxford's (1990) classification and on the way students get help from the way learning strategies were taught and the help students received from each other.

### ***7.9 Contributions of the Present Study***

The researcher claims that the present study has made some significant contribution to the area of language learning strategies, particularly in the Sultanate of Oman where this study has been conducted. These contributions can be summarized as follows:

1. There has been some earlier research work on learning strategies carried out in Oman, for example, Awadh (2003) but this is, to the best of my knowledge, the first time research on language learning strategies investigates the effect of teaching methods on the use of learning strategies in the Sultanate of Oman.

2. This study also suggests introducing the teaching of language learning strategies within the framework of cognitive and sociocultural theory, which may be considered as a contribution to the field of Applied Linguistics.
3. The researcher has designed a teaching model and prepared a "Teacher's Guide" ad hoc to teach learning strategies. This model can be improved or altered to suit different teaching contexts.
4. This research is conducted by a teacher who has worked at different educational institutions ranging from preparatory schools to a university level.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations**

#### ***8.0 Introduction***

The purpose of this study as mentioned before was to research the impact of teaching methods on the use of learning strategies. It also aimed at investigating the role of language proficiency in employing these strategies. The focus was on examining these strategies within the cognitive and sociocultural perspectives. This research revealed the frequency use of language learning strategies and the relationship between language learning strategies, the teaching methods and language proficiency.

#### ***8.1 Conclusions***

This concluding chapter contains a summary of the key findings regarding the aims and the research questions of the study, followed by a consideration of pedagogical implications and recommendations for teachers at schools and higher education institutions' lecturers and professors in Oman and in similar contexts where English is taught as a second/foreign language. The chapter also presents suggestions for further research and the limitations of the study are also included. Finally the chapter concludes with a brief summary of the aforementioned sections.

Taking into consideration the role learning strategies play in enhancing students' endeavor to learn and the impact of teaching methods on the choice of these strategies and the way students learn, the principal aim of this study was to investigate this impact in the context of foreign language teaching and learning in general, and in particular it aims to examine whether language learning strategies could be taught within cognitive and sociocultural theories. The secondary aim of the study was to examine the role of English language proficiency in the choice of learning strategies and whether it decreases or increases the impact of teaching methods.

The study was conducted at the University of Nizwa in the Interior Region of the Sultanate of Oman. The mixed methods approach was adopted to gather data by means of a variety of research tools such as self-report SILL questionnaire, interviews, classroom observations, and students' diaries over the period of a whole semester.

Collecting the data was done in different ways. First, the SILL questionnaire was conducted at the beginning of the semester to explore the frequency use of learning

strategies employed by the learners on their own will without any intervention from a teacher or a more able peer. For this investigation, two groups were assigned, a treatment group and a control group, both of which were selected randomly. The treatment group was taught language learning strategies according to a model designed by the researcher. At the end of the semester, the same questionnaire was administered to examine the impact of teaching methods, the assistance offered by the more able peers and the role of English proficiency on the students' choice of learning strategies and the frequency of these strategies.

In spite of the fact that the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the data collected by the questionnaire and by the other means illustrated the frequency of learning strategies employed by the learners and the impact of teaching methods and English language proficiency on students' choice, it could be difficult to claim the generalization of these findings beyond those learners who involved in the study and the contexts of the present study. During the same semester, teachers at the Department of Foreign Languages/ English Section were interviewed. Towards the end of the semester, randomly selected students were interviewed and students' diaries were collected. During the whole semester, the researcher wrote down his own observations about the way the students use the learning strategies and how. The ultimate aim of the procedures and investigations was to form a clear image of the impact of teaching methods on the use of learning strategies in a foreign language context and to find out the role English proficiency plays in the way students learn and how they benefit from the methods of teaching and accordingly to develop a better understanding of implications these findings may have of the relationship between teaching methods and learning strategies and also the possibility of examining language learning strategies within the cognitive and sociocultural perspectives.

The findings of the study have yielded that the students in this context use language learning strategies in different ways and there are some types of these strategies which have preferences and others come at the bottom of students' frequency use. Oxford (1990a:300) suggested a scale upon which one could assess students' strategy choices. According to her scale, an average score between 3.5 to 5.0 is considered high, 2.5 to 3.4 is medium and 1.5 to 2.4 is low. In general, using this scale, Omani students who

participated in the study are considered to be medium users of learning strategies. However, these strategies were ranked differently by the participants. The ranking of the students, at the beginning of the semester was as follows: metacognitive came at the top of the list by both groups, memory strategies was the second choice of the TG and the third of the CG. Compensation strategies were the second frequently used by the TG and forth by the CG. Cognitive strategies ranked at the bottom by the TG and the second to the bottom by the CG. Affective and social strategies were ranked low by the two groups. These rankings differed at the end of the semester probably as the result of teaching and collaborative learning as explained in Chapter Seven.

Teachers who teach these students or in similar contexts need to be aware of the fact that students use their own learning strategies, but not necessarily effectively, and they may use ineffective strategies which may hinder their learning rather than enhancing and improving it which may entail teachers' intervention. As the findings revealed, the teaching of learning strategies may benefit and change students' preferences to the better. The findings revealed that, despite the fact that English proficiency plays a role in the choice of learning strategies; it may not increase or decrease the influence of the teaching methods on the choice of all types of strategies. This area needs to be investigated further.

Referring to the aim of the study and the research questions posed in Chapter One, Section 1.3, the findings which were presented and discussed in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven illustrated that students benefited from learning strategies instruction and from the collaborative learning. Considering the classroom as a community in which students interact socially and exchange their experience and learning strategies and provide scaffolding to those who need assistance and operating on learners' zone of proximal development appeared to be fruitful and demanding. Therefore, the key findings of the study may support the teaching of learning strategies explicitly within the cognitive and sociocultural perspectives.

The finding showed that social factors may contribute in the types of strategies students may use. Moreover, the findings indicated that the way students were taught in the past may affect the way they conceptualise learning and what aspect of the language they may focus on. As the students' diaries revealed, many students thought that

memorizing vocabulary and learning grammar may improve their English. This may clarify why memory and cognitive strategies ranked top. For example, cognitive strategies ranked top and memory strategies the second to the top by the CG. While these strategies ranked fourth and third respectively by the TG. This may indicate that if students are left to choose their strategies alone they may be guided by their earlier experience and the way they were taught by teachers who might have followed outdated methods such as Audiolingualism and Grammar-translation Method.

For those learners who are not able to use learning strategies effectively or those who use ineffective strategies, the intervention of teachers and group work and scaffolding from more able students may help. This does not suggest that less able learners can be good just by using the learning strategies used by 'good language learners'. On the contrary, it means that discussing how to use the strategies and when to use and why to use them may help the less able peers. This way, students may be aware of these strategies and then by evaluating them, they may find that these strategies work with them, so they decide to adopt and employ them finally.

## ***8.2 Implications and Recommendations***

The aim of this study as mentioned earlier was to explore the impact of teaching methods of students' use of language learning strategies. In order to explore this, the researcher investigated students' frequency use of these strategies on their own devices. The implementations of learning strategies in classroom grounded on two superficially contrasting perspectives; cognitive and sociocultural theories.

Teachers who were interviewed showed positive attitudes towards language learning strategies and almost all of them stated that they did not adhere to one prescribed method. The data collected as presented in Chapter Six revealed that the students and the teachers perceived these strategies differently. Moreover, students' diaries and interviews demonstrated that they benefited from the instruction of these strategies and from the scaffolding they received from their peers and their teacher. Accordingly, some implications and recommendations for teaching and learning English as a foreign/second language may be drawn as will be presented in what follows:

1. As the research findings demonstrated, high proficiency learners reported using different types of strategies. It is recommended that English language teachers encourage

group work and assign these 'good language learners' in these groups to provide scaffolding and assist less able students to use strategies effectively.

2. The findings also revealed the importance of teaching learning strategies explicitly to teach students what to learn and how to learn. As asserted by Chamot et al (1996:180) effective strategies can be taught and learned. Based on these findings, it is possible for teachers to encourage autonomous learning by strategy training.

3. The findings revealed that these students did not use affective and social strategies as other types of strategies. It is recommended that teachers should focus on these strategies because they are important ones. As explained by Oxford (1990a) language learners can control their emotion, attitudes, motivation and values through effective strategies. Moreover, social strategies are very important since learning a language is done within a social context and between people, because as suggested by Oxford (1990a) language is a type of social behaviour, that is to say it is communication which only takes place between and among other people. .

4. It is also recommended that teachers try to raise students' awareness about these strategies and also to encourage group and collaborative learning. It could be noticed that Omanis are cooperative in their daily life; therefore, collaborative learning is part of Omani culture. That is to say what is considered as a norm outside the classroom in students' daily life could be incorporated into classroom.

5. The data collected from students' interviews and diaries revealed that the participants believe that learning grammatical rules and memorizing vocabulary, e.g. orthographically and phonologically, by heart may improve their language, therefore, it is recommended that teachers encourage students to apply these rules and vocabulary, that is to say to move from product to process.

6. The researcher recommends workshops and seminars to be held at higher education institutions to provoke discussions about language learning strategies, their instruction and their role in encouraging autonomous learning.

### ***8.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Future research***

The present study is claimed to be significant and valuable in dealing with a considerably important topic, that is the area of language learning strategies and it has attempted to reconcile cognitive and sociocultural views and to introduce the language

learning strategies within these two superficially contrasting theories. However, as no research is perfect, certain drawbacks have been found and detected. The following points raise critically these limitations.

1. The participants of the study were those students who were enrolled in English 2 (ENGL 152) course. In terms of the years of study at the university they were not homogenous. At the University of Nizwa, students are free to take the university mandatory courses at any time, so those students have different experiences of learning English which may negatively affect the population.
2. The number of students who participated in the study, especially those who were interviewed, was not enough to represent Omani university students.
3. The number of teachers who were involved was not enough to probe teachers' opinions and views about learning strategies instruction.
4. In terms of methodology, using diary, interviews and observations has the danger of subjective interpretations of the data collected which may negatively affect the findings.

The researcher suggests the following to be taken into account for future research.

1. Teachers can find out by themselves students' use of these strategies through classroom activities and by testing what strategies they claim using rather than depending only on students' self-reported questionnaire and interviews.
2. There may be a follow-up by teachers to students' learning strategies to find whether these students use the strategies they have been taught in the future.
3. The relation between cultural and social factors on the use of learning strategies needs to be investigated further.
4. The development of learning strategies is a slow and lengthy process and therefore, longitudinal investigations are recommended in order to gain more in-depth understanding of how university students develop their learning strategies throughout their university academic journey.
5. Teachers, especially those who are not trained, need to be aware of students' learning styles and learning strategies, therefore training them is recommended.



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## *Appendix (A)*

Dear student

This questionnaire, which is a partial work for a PhD in Applied Linguistics at De Montfort University, UK, aims at investigating an academic issue relating to language learning strategies employed by foreign language students in Oman. The researcher assures you that the information you provide in response to the items in the questionnaire will be strictly confidential, and will be used only for the purpose of this research by the researcher. The researcher also assures that he will never disclose your personal information you provide to anyone. Moreover, he confirms that this questionnaire has nothing to do with the marks of your exams.

I hope that you will cooperate by providing accurate answers to the following questions. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Thank you

عزيزي الطالب/ عزيزتي الطالبة

هذه الإستبانة و التي صُممت كعمل تكميلي من أجل الحصول على درجة الدكتوراة في اللغويات التطبيقية من جامعة دي مونتفورد بالمملكة المتحدة تهدف لمعرفة استراتيجيات التعلم المستخدمة لدى الطلبة العمانيين عند تعلمهم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. يؤكد لكم الباحث تأكيدا جازما أن المعلومات التي ستدلون بها ستكون في غاية من السرية و لن تستخدم إلا لأغراض الدراسة و أن المعلومات الشخصية الواردة فيها لن تكون متاحة لأي شخص كائننا من كان سوى الباحث نفسه. كما يؤكد لكم أن نتائج هذه الاستبانة لا علاقة لها البتة بالاختبارات الفصلية. وشكرا على تعاونكم الكريم.

Osman Hassan Osman

University of Nizwa

Department of Foreign Languages

English Language Section

Name: (optional) ..... ID: .....

Sex: .....

TOEFL Score: .....

Grade of English 1: .....

Please read each statement carefully. Write the response (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) that tells how true of you the statement is. Answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be. There are no right or wrong answers. If you have any questions, let the teacher know immediately.

The strategy	Always 5	Usually 4	Sometimes 3	Seldom 2	Never 1
1. I think of relation between what I always know and new things I learn in English.					
2. I use new word in sentences so I can remember them.					
3. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.					
4. I review English lessons often.					
5. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board or on a street sign.					
6. I say or write new words several times.					
7. I try to talk like native English speakers.					
8. I practice the sounds of English.					
9. I use the English word I know in different ways.					
10. I watch English language TV programmes.					
11. I read for pleasure in English.					
12. I write notes, SMS message, emails, letters or reports in English.					
13. I first skim an English passage then go back and read carefully.					

The strategy	Your response	Always 5	Usually 4	Sometimes 3	Seldom 2	Never 1
14. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.						
15. I try not to translate word-for-word.						
16. I make summaries on information that I hear or read in English.						

17. To understand unfamiliar English words I make guesses.						
18. When I can't think of a word during conversation in English I use gesture.						
19. I read English texts without looking up every new word in a dictionary..						
20. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or a phrase that has similar meaning.						

21. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.						
22. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me better.						
23. I pay attention when someone speaks English.						
24. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.						
25. I look for people I can talk to in English.						
26. I think about my progress in learning English.						

27. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.						
28. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.						
29. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.						

The strategy	Your response	Always 5	Usually 4	Sometimes 3	Seldom 2	Never 1
30. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the speaker to slow down.						
31. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.						
32. I practice English with other students.						
33. I ask for help from English speakers.						
34. I ask questions in English.						
35. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.						

## ***Appendix (B)***

### ***Teacher's Guide for Language Learning Strategies Instruction***

This guide sheds light on learning strategies employed by students from two different perspectives: psychological and sociocultural. It aims to develop students' independence and autonomous learning and to encourage self-centred approach. On one hand psychological perspective views learning strategies as a product of cognitive style, on the other hand sociocultural perspective views them as a “process directly connected to the practices of cultural groups through which novices develop into competent members of these communities” (Donato and McCormick: 1994). The former is basically associated with quantitative research, i.e. based on object observation of empirical data. The latter is connected with qualitative research as pointed out by Oxford and Schramm (2007:49).

Some researchers, for example, Zuengler and Miller (2006) describe the two perspectives as incommensurable, irreconcilable and parallel worlds because their ontological and epistemological foundations are different. However, these two as suggested by Oxford and Schramm (2007:49) could be linked in a single framework. They advocate the complimentary of the two perspectives and that could provide opportunities for synergy that might lead to a powerful and useful theory research on learning strategies.

Oxford (1990a) defines learning strategies as “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations.”

Learning strategies can be divided into two major classes: direct and indirect. These two classes of strategies can be subdivided into six groups: memory, cognitive, and compensation (direct strategies).: metacognitive, affective, and social (indirect strategies).

It is worth mentioning that there is an interrelationship between direct and indirect strategies and that they support each other.

The above categories can be subdivided further into 19 strategy sets as suggested by Oxford (1990a):



### Direct Strategies

1. Memory strategies (creating mental images, applying images and sounds, reviewing well and employing action.)
2. Cognitive strategies (practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning and creating structure for input and output.)
3. Compensation strategies (guessing intelligently, overcoming limitations in speaking and writing.)

### Indirect Strategies

1. Metacognitive strategies (centering your learning, arranging and planning your learning, and evaluating your learning.)
2. Affective strategies (lowering your anxiety)
3. Social strategies (asking questions, cooperating with others and emphasizing with others.)

All direct strategies require mental processing of language. The three groups do this processing differently. For example, memory strategies help learners store and retrieve new information. Cognitive strategies enable learners to understand and produce new language by many different means. Compensation strategies allow learners to use the language despite their often large gaps in knowledge.

Indirect strategies which underpin the business of learning do this differently either. Metacognitive strategies allow learners to control their own cognition by applying functions such as arranging, planning and evaluating. Affective strategies help students to regulate their emotions, motivations and attitudes. Social strategies aid learning through interaction with others.

Suggested strategies to be taught based on Oxford (1990a):

#### ***First Direct Strategies:***

##### ***(I) Memory Strategies***

- a) Creating mental linkages (e.g. grouping, associating/elaborating and placing new words into a context).
  - b) Applying images and sounds (e.g. using imagery, semantic mapping,).
  - c) Reviewing well (e.g. structured reviewing).
- a) Creating Mental Linkages:

**1. Grouping**, e.g. categorizing words grammatically (nouns, verb, adjective...etc.) or looking for their synonyms and antonyms. Also learning collocations of new words can help create imagery, e.g. 'traffic' collocates with 'jam', 'light' and 'warden'. Give a list of words from the list of new words you have taught and then ask them to put into groups or look for synonyms and collocations e.g. Examples from Ellis and Sinclair (1996:35):

Group 1: shoe              shop              shout              shine              sheep

Group 2: Greenhouse breadboard      penknife

Group3: biology              geology              psychology

Group4: run              jump              hop              sprint              jog

Teachers can ask what each group has in common to clarify the idea of grouping words.

**2. Associating/Elaborating strategies.** This involves associating new learnt information with that already in memory. Teachers need to activate students schemata (background knowledge), e.g. the word 'accident' can be associated with a real car accident seen earlier and 'prehistoric' can be associated with pictures of prehistoric people in mind. Ask students to associate the new words they have studied with information they already know. For example, 'sharpen' can be associated with sharpening a pencil. 'Monster' can be associated with any scary creature known in the students' society, e.g. 'hyena'. 'Legendary' can be associated with the famous story "Ali Baba and Forty Thieves" and/or Sindbad the Sailor and so on.

**3. Placing new words into a context.** This involves placing new words or expressions in meaningful contexts which may enhance remembering, e.g. 'murky'. *The murky water kept the scientists from knowing the answer.* Ask students to use the new words in contexts to help them remember the meanings.

**b) Applying Images and Sounds:**

**1. Using imagery.** Creating a mental imagery enhance remembering, e.g. The word 'smell' may be remembered by creating a mental imagery of a girl smelling a flower. Again 'survivor' may be remembered by creating a mental imagery of a person who had a narrow escape when his/her car crashed.

**2. Semantic Mapping.** This strategy involves arranging relationships on paper to create a semantic map, e.g. the word ‘hair’ can be arranged by arranging colours (black, brown, grey and so on) and/or by appearance (straight, silky, curly...etc.).

**c) Reviewing Well**

**1. Structured Reviewing.** This strategy is useful for remembering new material in the target language. This strategy entails students to practice the new material taught again and again until the material is easily used and become automatic. For example, was ‘The Loch Monster’, the teacher encourages students to read the text several times till they are able to retell the story, using the new words, without referring to the text.

**(II) Cognitive Strategies**

a) Practicing (repeating, recognizing and using formulas and patterns, and practicing naturalistically).

b) Receiving and Sending Messages (getting the idea quickly, using resources for receiving and sending messages).

c) Analyzing and Reasoning (reasoning deductively, analyzing expressions, transferring)

d) Creating structure for input and output (taking notes, summarizing, highlighting).

**a) Practicing.**

1. Repeating. This strategy should include meaningful understanding. Learners should be encouraged to listen to native speakers of the target language, repeatedly, e.g. by watching TV programmes in the target language. Also they should be encouraged to read in the target language repeatedly until they understand the reading texts well. To achieve this, they have to read the same passage several times using different reading skills such as scanning and skimming. This strategy can be applied in the four skills.

2. Recognizing and Using Formulas and Patterns. This strategy enhances comprehension and production. Learners can be taught ‘ready made’ expressions as whole chunks, e.g. ‘by the way’, ‘how are you?’ ‘what about you?’ ‘I would like to ...’ and so on.

3. Practicing Naturalistically. Audio cassettes or CDs can be used by the teacher to practice naturalistic contexts. Students can practice taking notes, doing exercises based on the listening texts. The accompanied CDs with the *Vision textbooks* can be useful sources for this strategy. Teachers may encourage students to practice this strategy outside the classroom by watching TV English programmes, e.g. BBC, CNN, Oman

English Channel...etc. To practice reading in an authentic way, teachers can encourage Extensive Reading. It can be a part of continuous assessment. Teachers help and guide students to find authentic materials, e.g. newspapers, magazines and story books. Presentation can be encouraged to practice naturalistically in speaking. A student can give a presentation and others can participate by asking questions and arguing for/against the topic discussed. To practice naturalistic writing, students can send each other emails, conduct interviews and write autobiographies. To integrate writing and reading skills, they can be asked to write summaries of the books or articles they have read. Students can also be encouraged to participate in the College Newsletter and publish their own contributions.

### ***b) Receiving and Sending Messages***

#### **1. Getting the Idea Quickly:**

This strategy is mainly used to select what students need or want to understand while practicing reading or listening skills. To employ this strategy effectively, students need to use two important techniques; skimming (searching for the main ideas) and scanning (searching for specific details). Teachers can provide students with questions before they start reading and listening as a means of giving them certain clues for the locations of specific facts, e.g. Read the Title and look at the pictures. What do you expect to read about? What does the picture on page () suggest to you?

#### **2. Using Resources for Receiving and Sending Messages:**

Another strategy under this rubric is using resources for receiving and sending messages. Students should be encouraged to use dictionaries, word lists, grammar books, encyclopedias, thesaurus, magazines, books on history and culture to provide students with information to better understand the spoken and written language, e.g. Teachers ask students to find more information from the Net about The Loch Ness Monster, Hamza Eddin or any other topic.

### ***c) Analyzing Reasoning***

These strategies help students think and learn rather than memorize information without analyzing it.

#### **1. Reasoning deductively:**

The teacher can provide students with a text that contains *s* and *'s* (plural marker, present simple marker and possessive marker respectively).and ask students the number of words that end in *s* or *'s* and whether they always mean the same. This way students utilize this strategy and be able to distinguish between plural, present simple and possessive *s*.

## 2. Analyzing Expression:

To understand the meanings of new words, students may employ this strategy. For example, students can be encouraged to break down unknown phrases or longer words into their component parts, e.g. 'uncomfortable' may be broken into (un + comfort + able). Another example from Oxford (1990:83) the phrase *premeditated crime* can be broken this way: *crime* (bad act), *mediate* (think about), and *pre-* (before) to be interpreted as: an evil act that is planned in advance.

## 3. Transferring:

This strategy involves applying previous knowledge to facilitate new knowledge in the target language. This strategy should be applied with a precaution because as noticed by Oxford (1990:85) it can cause inaccuracy if irrelevant knowledge is transferred. An example of this irrelevant transfer is obvious in the omission or misuse of the indefinite article *a/an* among the Arabic speakers. The following is a correct example of transferring. A longer word in English is built by adding affixes to the root of the word, e.g. 'independence' , students can transfer their previous knowledge of the Arabic language in building longer words from triliteral words.

### ***d) Creating Structure for Input and Output***

The strategies under this rubric facilitate all four skills. For example, they aid students to sort and organize information which may be used effectively for future speaking and writing.

## 1. Taking Notes

This strategy can be employed while listening to a lecture or reading a text book or an article. It is very important to focus students' attention while taking notes on understanding rather than writing. Teachers may instruct students to take unstructured notes and then go back to organize them later on. No need to say students need a lot of

practice to develop the skill of note taking. While playing VISION tapes, students try to take notes and discuss with the teacher.

## 2. Summarizing

This strategy helps students structure new input and understand what they have read by summarizing the original passage they have read. To help students summarize, teachers can ask them to give a title to what has been read. Another way is to underline the topic sentence of each paragraph. Teachers give an article for students to summarize as homework.

## 3. Highlighting

Different techniques can be used to employ this strategy, e.g. using circles, using colours, underlining to mention but few.

### ***(III) Compensation Strategies***

The strategies under this rubric are employed to help overcome knowledge limitations in all four skills.

#### a) Guessing Intelligently

This strategy is useful for the receptive skills (listening and reading). Teachers need to encourage students utilize this strategy using the following techniques:

##### 1. Using Linguistic Clues

Students' attention can be turned to use linguistics cues, .e.g. unfolding words into roots, stems and affixes (prefixes and suffixes). Also students may guess the meaning of a new word by using the contexts (known words help knowing the meaning of an unknown word).

##### 2. Using Other Clues

Reading the key sentences of each paragraph may give a global understanding of a whole passage. Noticing transitional words, e.g. 'however', 'moreover' 'on the other hand' and so on may indicate how authors or speakers arrange and organize their ideas. Teachers may also activate students' background knowledge to help them guess about what they hear or read.

### ***b) Overcoming Limitations in Speaking and Writing***

#### **1. Getting Help**

Students can be encouraged to get help from more able ones for missing expression, either in writing or in speaking.

2. Using a Circumlocution (using several words to describe or explain a single concept) or Synonyms. Students need to be trained in using this strategy. For example, if a student does not know the word 'giraffe', s/he describes it as 'a large animal with a very long neck and long legs that lives in Africa.'

#### ***Second Indirect Strategies:***

1) Metacognitive strategies (centering your learning, arranging and planning your learning, and evaluating your learning.)

2) Affective strategies (lowering your anxiety, encouraging yourself, and taking your emotional temperature)

3) Social strategies (asking questions, cooperating with others and emphasizing with others.)

#### ***(I) Metacognitive Strategies***

According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990:8) "Students without metacognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction or opportunity to plan their learning, monitor their progress, or review their accomplishments and future learning direction."

The following are metacognitive strategies:

a) Centering your Learning (overviewing and linking with already known material, paying attention)

b) Arranging and Planning your Learning (organizing, setting goals and objectives)

c) Evaluating your Learning (self-monitoring)

#### ***a) Centering your Learning***

##### **1. Overviewing and Linking with Already Known Material:**

Teachers encourage students to prepare for the upcoming lesson beforehand. For example, if the next lesson is 'Mysteries', students are asked to link what they are going to read with legend stories in Oman. They may be told to think of any vocabulary needed to talk about a famous legend in Oman which may motivate them to study new words related to this topic. For writing an assignment next lesson, students may be told about

the topic of the writing to brainstorm and to create a list of related vocabulary in order to be prepared for the future writing.

## 2. Paying Attention

This strategy is essential for all the skills. According to Oxford (1990:154) this strategy involves two modes: direct attention (to decide to pay attention to the whole task, avoiding irrelevant distracters) and selective attention (to decide in advance to pay attention to specific details). This strategy can be applied in all skills, for example, in a reading passage students attention can be turned to how transitional words are used. In a grammar lesson, students may focus on the use of base + s form in singular present simple and so on.

### b) Arranging and Planning your Learning

#### 1. & 2. Organizing and Setting Goals and Objectives:

This strategy entails students to use a variety of tools, e.g. to create a suitable physical environment, scheduling well, keeping a language learning notebook, a reading or vocabulary log. First, students should be encouraged to set an appropriate and peaceful environment at the hostel or at home without much background noise. Bright, enough light is also necessary.

A notebook is an indispensable tool for learners. It is useful for writing down new vocabulary in contexts and also for writing down new expressions and structures. Teachers also need to encourage students to obtain a reading/ vocabulary log. This log should contain students' goals and objectives for language learning. As remarked by Oxford (1990:157) "Students without aims are like boats without rudders; they do not know where they are going, so they might never get there!" For example, students may set as a long-term aim to read a magazine or a story book in the coming week, or to read a book pre week/month during this semester and so on.

### c) Evaluating Your Learning.

#### 1. Self-monitoring

Teachers encourage students to monitor their own errors and to write down their most significant difficulties in their notebooks. This may help them eliminate these difficulties if they are able to know the reasons. For example, if students are able to pinpoint the misuse of indefinite articles, they may be able to overcome this difficulty in



their future work by themselves. In writing students can help each other monitor their writing difficulties or swap their work and ‘detect’ each others writing without teachers’ unnecessary intervention.

## ***(II) Affective Strategies***

### **a) Lowering Your Anxiety**

Anxiety can play a negative role in learning. Teachers need to help students lower their anxiety. How to do is left for the teachers. However, some examples can be given, for example, by giving him/her an easy task and praising them on their attempt.

## ***(III) Social Strategies***

The strategies under this rubric are very important, however, these may be influenced by culture. Males (very few) and females (the majority in each class) will hardly benefit from each others at our university (University of Nizwa). This can be overcome by putting men with men and women with women).

### **a) Asking Questions**

#### **1. Asking for Clarification or Verification**

It is a very useful strategy to ask for clarification or verification should students know the appropriate way of asking. Therefore, teachers need to introduce students to questions such as the following:

Would you repeat that, please?

Please speak more slowly.

I’m sorry, I don’t understand.

What was that again? ... etc. (Oxford, 1990:169).

While reading, students may ask someone who is more proficient in the target language for clarification or verification.

### **b) Cooperation with Others**

Language in general is human, therefore all its aspects is a social act. It entails cooperating with other people.

#### **1. Cooperating with Peers**

This strategy involves doing together with other learners, especially those live together in the same hostel (or room mates). Teachers can encourage this strategy, for example, those who live together can be told to talk in English with each other for an hour every day.

They can review their lessons together and so on. Students may prepare together a topic for a presentation or collect information to write an assignment.

### **Models for Language Learning Strategy Instruction**

As a starting point it is better to define a model. According to VanPatten and Williams (2007: 5) there is a good deal of confusion between theories and models. Following their definition a model describes processes or groups of processes of a phenomenon. A model does not account for or explain why different components of a phenomenon interact but it explains how they interact. Another difference between a theory and a model is that, a theory is required to predict relying on generalizations, whereas this is not required of a model.

Referring back to the models, there is a sequence of four steps which are common to all models as asserted by Rubin et al (2006:142). These steps are:

1. raise awareness of the strategies employed by learners.
2. teachers demonstrate and model the strategies to increase the students' awareness of their own thinking and learning process.
3. create opportunities for students to practice using strategies to help them move towards autonomous utility of strategies in order to gradually withdraw scaffolding.
4. help students to self-evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies employed and then be able to transfer them to new tasks.

McDonough (2005: 156) cited in Murphy (2008:305) notes the following instructional framework to be shared by many authors:

1. preview materials for useful strategies and preview the students' current learning strategies repertoire.
2. present the strategy that is going to be introduced by giving its name, and explaining why and when to use it.
3. model the strategy by demonstrating how to use it.
4. develop students' ability to evaluate the strategy in order to transfer it to new tasks.

In what follows, a model is suggested for teaching learning strategies bearing in mind the steps mentioned above and utilizing from the models suggested by Chamot (2005); Chamot et al (1999), Cohen (1998) and Grenfell & Harris (1999).

This model aims at helping teachers to integrate learning strategies into their language tasks and to follow certain steps to teach the strategies efficiently. Before implementing these steps, teachers should be aware of the students' styles in order to be able to understand the preferred and appropriate strategies to be employed by his/her students. (the timing of each step is set for a one-hour lecture.)

Step 1: Teacher raises students' awareness of the strategies they always use to facilitate their learning. Students brainstorm and mention the strategies which they use for the skill to be taught e.g. How do you prefer to learn new words? (5-10 minutes)

Step 2: Teacher models these strategies he/she intends to teach in order to train students and show them how to use. (10 minutes)

Step 3: Students practice the strategy/strategies taught in groups (4-5 students). At this stage the teacher and/or a more able peer provide the scaffolding needed and then withdraw themselves when students are able to use the strategies taught. (almost 25 minutes)

Step 4: Students evaluate the strategies they have used and the utility they gained from using them. (5 minutes)

Step 5: The teacher asks students which strategies work for them or suit their styles. This step is very important because students may vary in their preferences of strategies. (5 minutes)

Step 6: The teacher checks if students are able to transfer these strategies to other tasks, but some students may not be able to do so. Scaffolding may be needed again for these students in particular. This step is also important especially for students who are learning English as a medium for studying other subjects. (5 minutes)

Step 7: The teacher and students evaluate the strategies used and their impact on what they have studied and to what extent they have benefited from them. (5 minutes)

Step 8: The teacher assigns homework for students and reminds them to use similar strategies in doing their homework. This step is to enhance the use of learning strategies alone or in group without the teacher's help and to be familiar with the use of strategies.

These steps should be carried out as an integral part of the lesson to be taught and not separately. Discussions between the teacher and students and between students themselves are encouraged for the whole class to participate in evaluating the strategies being taught. This gives students a feeling that they are responsible for their learning.

It is mentioned elsewhere that teachers' belief is very important in deciding whether or not to teach learning strategies. Therefore, their decision is of vital importance. Teachers as noticed by Borg (2003:81) are active and they are decision makers who make their instructional choices based on their knowledge, thought and beliefs. This knowledge is accumulated throughout their experience and career. They are also, as described by Sims and Sims, (1995:13) the managers and facilitators of the instructional system. The methods teachers adopt in their teaching affect, among other factors, the way they perceive learning strategies. The following chapter discusses the methods of teaching English language and the theories underpin each method and their impact on the learning of English.

## ***Sample Lesson (1)***

(The Risk or Not to Risk)

### ***1. Vocabulary Strategy***

Strategies to learn unfamiliar words:

Step 1: The teacher raises students' awareness of the strategies they always use to learn new vocabulary. Students brainstorm and discuss their strategies.

Step 2: The teacher introduces the strategies s/he intends to teach and models them.

Suggested strategies:

(Strategies to learn new words)

a) Breaking the word into roots and affixes to be easily identified.

e.g. poisonous = Noun + suffix = Adjective

b) Grouping words into their word class (parts of speech).

e.g. a poisonous snake (indefinite article + adjective + singular noun)

Applying images of the new word. (This strategy can be used to associate the new word with a visual or a picture)

e.g. sky-diving; students can associate this word with the picture on page 108.

Using the new word/s in meaningful sentences.

e.g. Children all over the world take vaccines against some diseases. They are vaccinated against these diseases.

c) Guessing intelligently

e.g. The chances that you will be bitten by a *poisonous* snake are really rare. Students can use clues such as 'bitten' and 'snake' to guess the meaning of 'poisonous'.

(Strategies to review vocabulary, to be used outside the classroom)

a) Repeating the new words very often to help remembering them.

b) Reviewing the new words periodically so as not to forget them.

(Strategies to recall vocabulary)

a) Trying to remember the situation where the new words are heard or seen in written forms.

b) Visualizing the spelling of new words in mind.

e.g. inclined (i-n-c-l-i-n-e-d)

(Strategies to make use of new vocabulary)

- a) Trying using the new words in a variety of ways (writing, speaking and/or reading).
- b) Practicing the already learnt words in writing, speaking and/or reading. The teacher may ask students to use the newly taught words in sentences of their own.

Step 3: Students practice the strategy/strategies taught in groups (4-5 students). At this stage the teacher and/or a more able peer provide scaffolding needed and then withdraw themselves when the less able students are able to use the strategies taught. The teacher assigns the new words to be learnt and asks them to employ the strategies discussed earlier to study them (about 25 minutes).

Step 4: Students evaluate the strategies they have used and the utility they gained from using them (about 5 minutes).

Step 5: The teacher discusses with the students the strategies that work well with them. This step is very important because students may vary in their preferences of strategies (about 5 minutes).

Step 6: The teacher checks if students are able to transfer these strategies to other tasks. This step is also important especially for those who are learning English as a medium of studying other subjects.

Step 7: The teacher and students evaluate the strategies used and their impact on what they have studied and what extent they have benefited from them.

Step 8: The teacher assigns homework for students and reminds them to use similar strategies in doing their homework. This strategy is to enhance the use of learning strategies alone or in group with the teacher's intervention in order to be familiarized with the use of strategies.

## ***2. Reading Strategies:***

Step 1: Teacher raises students' awareness of the strategies they use to facilitate their reading skills. Students brainstorm and mention the strategies which they use to become more familiar with the sounds in the target language. (about 5 minutes)

Step 2: Teacher introduces the strategies to be taught and then models them in order to train students and show them how to employ. (10 minutes or the teacher may decide)

Strategies suggested to be taught:

(Strategies to improve reading ability)

- a) Reading as much as possible in the target language, e.g. stories, newspapers, magazines.
- b) Using common sense and knowledge of the world, e.g. The teacher may discuss with the students the rate of risks, e.g. travelling in a car, one can take a risk of getting in an accident. Activating this background knowledge may facilitate understanding the text to be studied.
- c) Skimming a chapter/section in textbook, e.g. Students may skim the first paragraph to get the main idea and then go back and read it more carefully. The teacher may ask students to skim the first paragraph/s and then asks them what they think the text is about.
- d) Pay attention to the organization of the text, especially headings and subheadings.
- e) Make ongoing summaries of the reading in one's head or in a notebook, e.g. what is the first paragraph of 'To Risk or Not to Risk'?
- f) Using the title, subtitles and pictures for clues to predict what the text is about.

(Strategies for guessing unfamiliar words and grammatical structures which are not understood)

- a) Guess the approximate meaning by using clues from the surrounding words and structures, e.g. "Surveys show that most people are less afraid of 'natural' things than they are of 'artificial' ones. If a student knows the meaning of 'natural' s/he will easily guess the meaning of 'artificial'.
- b) Breaking down an unknown word/phrase and linking parts of it with familiar words, e.g. '... and more afraid of risks we're forced to take, such as eating food that has been 'genetically modified' or treated with chemicals.' with parts of other familiar words help guess their meanings.
- c) Use a target language dictionary to find the definition of the word using the target language and to see how the word is used in sentences.

Step 3: Students discuss the strategy/strategies taught in groups and then practice reading the parts assigned by the teacher. Students try to apply the strategies, e.g. Apply strategies a, b and c (the teacher specifies for students exactly what to do; time depends on the length of the given part).

Step 4: Students evaluate the strategies they have employed and the utility they gained from using them. (about 5 minutes)

Step 5: The teacher asks students which strategy/strategies works/work for them or suit their learning styles. This step is very important because students may vary in their preferences of strategies. (about 5 minutes)

Step 6: The teacher checks if students are able to transfer these strategies to other tasks, but some students may not be able to do so. (about 5 minutes)

Step 7: The teacher and the students evaluate the strategies used and their impact on what they listened to and to what extent they have benefited. (5 minutes)

Step 8: The teacher assigns paragraphs to students to be read outside as homework encouraging them to try using the strategies taught.

### ***3. Listening Strategy***

Step 1: Teacher raises students' awareness of the strategies they use to facilitate their listening skill. Students brainstorm and mention the strategies which they use to become more familiar with the sounds in the target language. (about 5 minutes)

Step 2: Teacher introduces the strategies to be taught and then models them in order to train students and show them how to employ. (10 minutes or the teacher may decide)

Strategies suggested to be taught:

- a) Pay special attention to specific aspects of the language such as the way the speaker pronounces certain sounds.
- b) Try to predict what the speaker is going to say based on what has been said before.
- c) Prepare for talks and performances students may hear in the target language by reading the text (to be listened to) before starting listening.
- d) Listen to key words that may carry the bulk of meaning.
- e) Listen to word and sentence stress to be familiar with the target language stress and intonation.

Step 3: Students discuss the strategy/strategies taught in groups and then practice while the teacher plays the tape recorder. (time depends on the listening material).

Step 4: Students evaluate the strategies they have employed and the utility they gained from using them. (about 5 minutes)



Step 5: The teacher asks students which strategy/strategies work for them or suit their learning styles. This step is very important because students may vary in their preferences of strategies. (about 5 minutes)

Step 6: The teacher checks if students are able to transfer these strategies to other tasks, but some students may not be able to do so. (about 5 minutes)

Step 7: The teacher and the students evaluate the strategies used and their impact on what they listened to and to what extent they have benefited. (5 minutes)

Step 8: teachers tells students to increase their exposure to the target language by attending out-of-class events, visiting Writing Centre, listening to radio (e.g. Oman FM radio programmes), watching TV (e.g. BBC and CNN TV channels) or by seeing movies in the target language.

### *Sample Lesson (2)*

(The Risk or Not to Risk)

Language Level: Intermediate

Focus LLS: predicting; skimming; guessing from context and summarizing.

Language Objectives: Read and Comprehend a text with some scaffolding, whenever needed, from more able peers and/or the teacher.

Strategy Rationale: Using the above strategies can help students understand the text they read without depending on a dictionary and translating 'difficult' words into the target language.

Step 1: Teacher raises students' awareness of the strategies they use to facilitate their reading skills. Students brainstorm and mention the strategies which they use to become more familiar with the sounds in the target language. (about 5 minuets)

Step 2: Teacher introduces the strategies to be taught and then models them in order to train students and show them how to employ. (10 minuets or the teacher may decide)

Strategies suggested to be taught:

(Strategies to improve reading ability)

- Use the title, pictures to help predict the contents.
- Try to understand the meaning of a new word by dividing it into morphological parts (affixes/root).
- Try to understand the meaning of a new word (or a phrase) by guessing its meaning using clues from the text.
- Try to understand the text with translating it into the native language.
- If there is something difficult, ask one of the group.
- While reading, predict what is coming next.
- Pay attention to linking words, such as 'however', 'besides', 'on the other hand' to understand the structure.
- Try to figure out the main idea of each paragraph.
- Try to summarize the text in your own words (this can be done by the whole group with the book closed).

Step 3: Students discuss the strategy/strategies taught in groups and then practice reading the parts assigned by the teacher. Students try to apply the strategies.

Step 4: Students evaluate the strategies they have employed and the utility they gained from using them. (about 5 minutes)

Step 5: The teacher asks students which strategy/strategies works/work for them or suit their learning styles. This step is very important because students may vary in their preferences of strategies. (about 5 minutes)

Step 6: The teacher checks if students are able to transfer these strategies to other tasks, but some students may not be able to do so. (about 5 minutes)

Step 7: The teacher and the students evaluate the strategies used and their impact on what they have read and to what extent they have benefited. (5 minutes)

Step 8: The teacher assigns paragraphs to students to be read outside as homework encouraging them to try using the strategies taught.

## *Sample Lesson (2)*

### The Next Great Dying

Language Level: Intermediate

Focus LLS: Background Knowledge/Semantic Mapping

Strategy Objectives:

- Using meta-linguistic awareness to facilitate understanding a reading text.
- To arrange concepts and relationships on paper to create a semantic map.

Strategy Rationale: Activating students' meta-linguistic awareness help students to understand and be able to predict what they are going to read. It may also motivate them to read.

Step 1: The teacher discusses with students the strategies they use before reading a text to help them predict what they are reading and to create semantic mapping to help remember the new words.

-The teacher tells students that they are going to apply learning strategies “using background knowledge” and “Semantic Mapping”. S/he explains to students that these strategies help them understand and anticipate what the reading text is about and learn and remember the new words.. Teacher demonstrates and shows how to apply these strategies.

Step 2:

- The teacher tells students that they are going to employ the strategy ‘background knowledge’ and create semantic mapping for the new words (in bold) to help them better anticipate what they are going to read about.

-The teacher tells students to study the pictures and titles of the text. To activate students’ background knowledge, teachers discuss the following with them.

What causes species to become extinct? Why many species are in danger now? What should people do to preserve natural resources?

- Students in group discuss, using clues, what the text is about. They tell how they come to guess that.

- The teacher tells them to create semantic mapping for the new words in group. Students help each other in creating the semantic maps. The leader of the groups writes down their ideas.

Step 3:

- The teacher sets students into groups to study pictures and titles together. All students participate to help each other and the group leader writes their guesses. Students in groups study the pictures and titles and predict what the text is about. Each one of the group tells why s/he thinks so.

Then they work together to draw semantic mapping, e.g. Skelton; bones; skull; spine; pelvis; upper limbs, lower limbs. Students should be reminded that there are no right and wrong answers because they may create different clustering ideas.

Step 4: The teacher asks students to evaluate the strategy they have used and what they have gained.

Step 5: Teacher checks whether the strategy they have used are useful for them all.

Step 6: Teacher tells students to apply this strategy when they study their Major.

Step 7: Teacher and students evaluate the strategy they have used.

Step 8: Homework. Teacher assigns homework for students and reminds them to use similar strategies in doing their homework. S/he also asks them to put the new words into groups, e.g. 'noun, verb, adjective....etc.' and then put them into sentences.

### *Sample Lesson (3)*

#### The Next Great Dying

Language Level: Intermediate

Focus LLS: Taking Notes/ Summarizing/highlight

Strategy Objectives: Use 'strategies' to facilitate understanding a reading text.

Strategy Rationale: Taking Notes and Strategies help students determine how well they understand the text and structure new input. Taking Notes can be used in listening practice also while playing VISION tapes.

Step 1: Teacher discusses with students the strategies they use while listening or reading a text to help them understand while they are reading (or listening to a lecture).

-Teacher tells students that they are going to apply learning strategies 'highlighting' and 'summarizing'. S/he explains to students that these strategies help them understand texts. Teacher demonstrates and shows how to apply these strategies.

Step 2:

- Teacher tells students that they are going to employ the strategy 'summarizing' to help them better understand what they read.

-Teacher tells students to try to give a title to the paragraph they are reading. They can also underline the topic sentence for each paragraph and highlight key words. Then try to write the paragraph(s) assigned using their own words.

Step 3:

- Teacher sets students into groups (to underline, highlight) and give a title for each paragraph. (the teacher assign about 3 paragraphs for each group) All students discuss and the more able ones help those who are less able (scaffolding) and the group leader writes a summary of the paragraph by the help of all the group.

Step 4: Teacher asks students to evaluate the strategy they have used and what they have gained.

Step 5: Teacher checks whether the strategy they have used useful for them all.

Step 6: Teacher tells students to apply this strategy when they study their Major.

Step 7: Teacher and students evaluate the strategy they have used.

Step 8: Homework. Teacher assigns homework for students and reminds them to use similar strategies in doing their homework. Teacher also asks them to put the words into groups and then put them into sentences.

### *Sample Lesson (5)*

Rosa Parks

Language Level: Intermediate

Focus LLS: grouping and inferring/Background Knowledge/summarize

Strategy Objectives: Use ‘strategies’ to facilitate understanding and remembering new words before/while reading text.

Strategy Rationale: Grouping words into their parts of speech and guessing their meaning from contexts help students to learn and remember them. Summarizing help students to concentrate and gain confidence.

Step 1: Teacher discusses with students the strategies they use before/while reading a text to help them understand what they are reading.

-Teacher tells students that they are going to apply learning strategies ‘inferring’ and ‘summarizing’. S/he explains to students that these strategies help them understand texts. Teacher demonstrates and shows how to apply these strategies.

Step 2:

- Teacher tells students that they are going to employ the strategy ‘inferring’ and ‘summarizing’ to help them better understand what they read.

-Teacher tells students to try to give a title to the paragraph they are reading. They can also underline the topic sentence for each paragraph and highlight key words. S/he encourages them to guess the meaning of new words from the contexts and then try to use them in sentences of their own.

Step 3:

- Teacher sets students into groups to infer new words and give a title for each paragraph to be able to summarize. All students participate and the group leader writes a summary of the paragraph. Each group can be asked to summarize a paragraph or more.

Step 4: Teacher asks students to evaluate the strategy they have used and what they have gained.

Step 5: Teacher checks whether the strategy they have used useful for them all.

Step 6: Teacher tells students to apply this strategy when they study their Major.

Step 7: Teacher and students evaluate the strategy they have used.



Step 8: Homework. Teacher assigns homework for students and reminds them to use similar strategies in doing their homework.

## ***Sample Lesson (6)***

### **Writing Strategy**

Language Level: Intermediate

Focus LLS: Genre approach and Process writing

Strategy Objectives: Using ‘strategies’ to facilitate writing a paragraph

Strategy Rationale: Using genre approach in conjunction with process writing ensures that writing is not simply an outcome of internal processes, but is also a combination of purpose and context. Therefore writing should be done with a purpose in mind as pointed out by Gordon (2008:264).

Step 1: Teacher discusses with students the strategies they use while writing a paragraph or an essay. Then s/he asks students to define a paragraph. They may come to this definition or a similar one: a paragraph is a group of sentences which develop one main idea. It develops a topic, which is the main subject of the paragraph, in other words, it what the paragraph about. This topic is usually introduced in a sentence which is called a topic sentence. The topic sentence states a topic and a controlling idea that controls what the sentences in the paragraph will discuss. All other sentences, called the supporting sentences, should relate to and develop the controlling idea (Smalley et al: 2001)

-Teacher tells students that they are going to apply the learning strategies ‘brainstorming, prewriting, drafting revising and editing. S/he explains to the students that these strategies help them write appropriately. Teacher demonstrates and shows how to apply these strategies.

Step 2:

- Teacher tells students that they are going to employ the strategies listed above to help them better understand how to write.

Step 3:

- Teacher sets students into groups (4-5) to brainstorm and decide on the topic assigned to them to write. S/he asks them on decide on a purpose and accordingly think of the audience.

S/he may ask them to write on a topic, e.g. *Salalah is the most beautiful place in the Gulf*. Students individually write the draft paragraph and then exchange their writings and revise and check their errors, e.g. spelling, subject-verb agreement...etc. In the revising

stage, more able peers help finding the errors, explaining to the less able ones and then together (scaffolding needed) they correct the errors. Each one of the group writes his/her own paragraph alone (less able one may ask for help, either from a peer or a teacher). They exchange the final corrected version and check for each others. At this stage the teacher goes around checking and monitoring their work. (about 20-30 minutes)

Step 4: Teacher asks students to evaluate the strategy they have used and what they have gained. (about 5 minutes)

Step 5: Teacher checks whether the strategy they have used is useful for them all. about (5 minutes)

Step 6: Teacher tells students to apply this strategy when they study their Major.

Step 7: Teacher and students evaluate the strategy they have used. (5 minutes)

Step 8: Homework. Teacher assigns homework for students and reminds them to use similar strategies in doing their homework.

## *Appendix C*

### *Language Learning Strategies Employed by ESL/EFL Students: Teachers' Perceptions*

Dear Colleague,

Please rank the strategies below from 6-1 according to what you think your students use most frequently. This is part of my PhD thesis so the personal information you provide will only be used for this purpose and it will remain confidential.

I appreciate your help.

Osman Hassan Osman

De Montfort University, Leicester, UK

Please notice:

6 = most frequent

1 = least frequent

Name (optional): .....

Area of specialty: .....

Years of experience; .....

Language learning strategies have been defined by Rebecca Oxford as “Specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations.” She divides them into direct and indirect strategies. She subdivides each into a total of six groups. These are:

1. **Memory strategies:** which are used by students to help them remember new vocabulary, grammar rules or any new language items.
2. **Cognitive strategies:** these help learners think about and comprehend the new language items they study.
3. **Metacognitive strategies:** these strategies help students to regulate their own cognition, by evaluating how they are progressing in their learning, and to plan for future work.
4. **Compensation strategies:** these strategies are employed by learners to help them compensate for lack of knowledge.

5. **Affective strategies:** these strategies indicate how students feel about the target language and indicate their feeling towards its speakers.
6. **Social strategies:** these strategies are utilized by learners who interact with other people inside or outside the classrooms.

Learning Strategy	Rank (in your professional opinion)
Memory Strategy	
Cognitive Strategy	
Metacognitive Strategy	
Compensation Strategy	
Affective Strategy	
Social Strategy	

***Appendix (D)***  
***Students' Interview***

i. Bio-data

Gender:

Age:

Major:

Year of Study at the university:

TOEFL score:

Language learning Experience:

ii. Language Learning Strategies Employed

***Memory strategies***

1. How do you memorize new English words?
2. What helps you memorize the spelling of new words?
3. How do you memorize grammatical rules to apply them later when you write or speak?
4. How do you how other students learn new words?

***Cognitive Strategies***

1. How do you prepare for your English test?
2. Which do you? To prepare alone or with a class/roommate?
3. When do you use a dictionary?
4. Would you ask a class/roommate how to use the dictionary effectively?
5. What do think of translating the new words of an English text into Arabic when you read?
6. What do you do if there are some new words in a text that you are reading?
7. When you read, do you try to underline the main ideas? Do you ask someone else to help you find the main ideas?
8. When you write, do you think in Arabic first and then translate into English?
9. What about asking a class/roommate to help you plan and organize the ideas before you start writing?
10. When you watch an English film, do you pay attention to the speech or read the Arabic subtitles?

### ***Compensation Strategies***

1. What about guessing the meanings of new words while reading or listening to someone?
2. What do you think of asking someone to help you guess the meaning of new words?
3. What do you do when you can't find of a word during a conversation or writing?
4. If you were given a chance, would you ask others to help you find a word or an equivalent of a word you want to use?

### ***Metacognitive Strategies***

1. What do you think of taking notes during the lecture?
2. Before writing, do you try to plan and organize your ideas?
3. Which do you prefer to plan and organize your ideas alone or ask someone for help?
4. When watching an English programme on a TV, do you pay attention to the way people on the programme speak?
5. What do you do to be a better English learner?

### ***Affective Strategies***

1. How do you feel when you are asked to give a presentation in English in the classroom?
2. How do you feel when you speak English with a native speaker?
3. How do you feel when someone knows English better helps you?

### ***Social strategies***

1. What about reviewing English lessons with other students?
2. How do you check your spelling or pronunciation?
3. What do you think of people from other cultures who behave differently?

### ***General questions***

1. What do you think of teaching you how to use learning strategies?
2. How do you evaluate teaching learning strategies?
3. How do you evaluate working with other students during this semester?
4. What is the new thing/strategy you have learned this semester?

5. What are the strategies you are going to use when you review your lessons in the future?



## ***Appendix (E)***

### **Guidelines for Preparing English Language Learning Diaries**

Dear Student,

At the end of each week, please try to write what you have done in order to progress. The following guidelines may help you.

These guidelines are based on Nunan (1992) and Yang (2003).

#### ***Objectives:***

11. To enable students to articulate problems that they face while learning and therefore get help from teachers of more able peers.
12. To promote autonomous learning and to encourage students to lean on their own.
13. To motivate students to exchange ideas with their teachers and more able peers in order to gain confidence and make sense of difficult materials.
14. To encourage students generate more productive class discussion.
15. To encourage students to link between course materials and their own learning strategies and teaching strategies.
16. To create teacher-student and student-student interaction outside the classroom.
17. To make the class process oriented rather than product oriented.
18. To reflect on the progress students make in the English course.
19. To evaluate the strengths and weakness in students' learning.
20. To draw a roadmap for future autonomous learning.

#### ***General Guidelines:***

5. Go over the work you have done during this week and decide which activities (e.g. Moodle exercises, Assignments, Extensive Reading or course work) inside or outside the classroom were the most meaningful.
6. Give an example of your work during this week that shows your ability to use English in any of the four skill areas (listening, reading, writing, and speaking).
7. Write a short paragraph to show your progress.
8. Write a letter to your instructor to describe the following:
  - How you are improving your weakest areas or increasing your skills.
  - How you feel about this week's lessons.
  - How much you benefit from the learning strategies your teacher has introduced.

- Whether you started using new learning strategies.
- How much you benefited from other students.

### *Appendix (F)*

Dear Professor Mohammed A. Ismail, The Dean of the college of Arts and Science and the Acting Head of Foreign Language Department.

I would be grateful if you would kindly give your consent to do the practical work of my PhD at this university. My research is on the student-centered learning, which is highly valued and recommended by the university. The targeted classes are English 2 sections, 3 of them as experimental and 3 as control groups. I assure you that the identities of the students will remain anonymous and the information they provide will be only used for academic purposes and will not be disclosed to anyone except the researcher.

Osman Hassan Osman

Lecturer at Foreign Language Department

PhD Candidate at De Montfort University, UK

## *Appendix H*

### *Preliminary Codes on Learning Strategies Employed by the Participants*

Name:	AMEL
Gender	Female
Age	21
Major	Nursing
Years of study at the university	Year 2
TOEFL Score	450
Language learning experience	Almost 10 years

<p><b><i>Memory Strategies</i></b></p> <p>R: How do you memorize new English words?</p> <p>S: To memorize the new words, <b>I write the word several times on a piece of paper or repeat it several times orally.</b></p> <p>R: What helps you to memorize the spelling of new words?</p> <p>S: <b>For me memorizing the spelling of a new word is a bit difficult.</b> I learn them today and after two days I find that I cannot remember them. A teacher once told us, " to remember the spelling of 'difficult' words we should write them down many times and then keep using them all the time." So I try to do this now and I find it helpful.</p> <p>R: How do you memorize grammatical rules to apply them later when you write</p>	<p>Writing the new words several times to memorize`</p> <p>Spelling is a problem.</p>
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<p>or speak?</p> <p><b>S: I know grammar is very important but I do not need it in my studies (Nursing).</b> When</p> <p>R: Why do you think grammar is important for you?</p> <p>S: Grammar is important for me to speak and write English correctly and because of the exam.</p> <p>R: How do you know how other students learn new words?</p> <p><b>S: Sometimes I ask my friends how they learn the meanings and spelling of ‘difficult’ words and I try to do as they do.</b> (The researcher noticed that Amel, like many other students insisted on using the word ‘difficult’, although the researcher used ‘new’ or ‘unfamiliar’ rather than the word ‘difficult’.)</p> <p><i>Cognitive Strategies</i></p> <p>R: How do you prepare for your English test?</p> <p><b>S: I usually review my lessons every day and sometimes I prepare my lessons ahead of the teacher,</b> but sometimes it is difficult to do it because of some ‘difficult’ words even if I used the dictionary it would be difficult. I work hard during the exam week.</p> <p>R: Which do you prefer: to prepare alone or with a class/roommate?</p>	<p>Thinking that grammar is important but not for her in her studies.</p> <p>Exchanging ideas with others</p> <p>Reviewing her lessons every day and preparing her lessons ahead of the teacher.</p>
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<p><b>S: I prefer to study alone because I can concentrate well when I am alone.</b> But sometimes I might ask a friend (if she is from my region or my classmate) to explain or to clarify a point. (When the researcher asked if she could ask a male student about any difficult point that she was not able to understand or that her friend failed to help her with. She said she had never asked a male friend and never will as that is not acceptable.)</p>	<p>Preferring studying alone.</p>
<p>R: When do you use a dictionary?</p> <p><b>S: I often use a dictionary because most of the words in the textbook are difficult.</b> I use a bilingual dictionary to ‘translate’. (When the researcher asked her why she did not use a monolingual dictionary, she answered that this type of dictionary does not help and that she needs the meanings of words in Arabic to understand. From her answers it is clear that she never uses the dictionary to know the pronunciation or to learn the lexical category of new words. For her, the dictionary simply provides the equivalent of the Arabic word.)</p> <p>R: Would you ask a class/roommate how to use the dictionary effectively?</p> <p>S: Sometimes it is difficult to find a word because the dictionary is arranged alphabetically (and I don't know the</p>	<p>Consulting a bilingual dictionary often to know the Arabic equivalent.</p>



<p>helps me understand the text and highlight the most important things. She added that some students can predict the important things that might be the focus of the exam, so I used to ask them about their predictions.</p> <p>R: When you write, do you think in Arabic first and then translate into English?</p> <p>S: Yes, <b>I think in Arabic first because I can think easily in Arabic.</b> The teacher told us that if you think in Arabic and then translate into English you may make mistakes, but "It is difficult to think in English." She said</p> <p>R: What about asking a class/roommate to help you plan and organize the ideas before you start writing?</p> <p>S: I used to do this when I was going to write an assignment. She added that <b>planning together improves my writing. Sometimes I seek help from the "Writing Center"</b> (this belongs to the Foundation Institute and helps students with the writing skills and in proofreading, in particular, final year projects).</p> <p>R: When you watch an English film, do you pay attention to the speech or read the Arabic subtitles?</p> <p>S: I do not watch English films because</p>	<p>Thinking in Arabic in writing.</p> <p>Asking a more able peer in planning and organizing the ideas before writing an assignment.</p>
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<p>they present scenes which are against 'our' Islamic culture and traditions, but sometimes I may watch English films to learn English and to acquire native-like pronunciation. I pay attention to how they utter and pronounce words; however, it is difficult to do this and enjoy the film.</p> <p><b><i>Compensation Strategies</i></b></p> <p>R: What do you think about asking someone to help you guess the meaning of new words?</p> <p><b>S: I usually ask others to help me guess the meaning of words if I do not understand the text.</b></p> <p>R: What do you do when you can't find a word during a conversation or a writing task?</p> <p><b>S: I either use a synonymous word or explain the idea in other simple words.</b></p> <p>R: If you were given the chance, would you ask others to help you find a word or the equivalent of a word you want to use?</p> <p>S: It depends. If I desperately need the word, for example, to complete an assignment immediately, I will ask. If the word is not important, I don't bother asking for an equivalent.</p> <p><b>Metacognitive Strategies</b></p> <p>R: What do you think about note-taking during the lectures?</p>	<p>Asking help from other to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words.</p> <p>Using synonyms or explain the idea using other simple words.</p>
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<p><b>S: I always keep a notebook with me to write down new words and grammar.</b> I often write down the new words and their meanings, all the time in Arabic. I always write the pronunciation in Arabic, but a teacher told me once that was wrong and misleading so I stopped doing that. In my notebook I write everything the teacher says during the lecture.</p> <p>R: Before writing, do you try to plan and organize your ideas?</p> <p><b>S: No, I used to start straight from the beginning and ideas may come later</b></p> <p>R: When watching an English programme on a TV, do you pay attention to the way people on the programme speak?</p> <p>S: I do not watch English programmes. (When the researcher asked her why she did not watch English programmes, the answer was that she lived in the hostel and there was only one common TV. At home, other members of the family may not allow her to watch TV because they think the English films may contradict with Islamic culture. But when she found the opportunity to, she would pay attention to the way people spoke to learn adequate pronunciation because the teacher who taught them pronunciation advised them to do so.)</p>	<p>Keeping a notebook to write down unfamiliar words and grammar.</p> <p>Using no plans before writing.</p>
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<p>R: What do you do to be a better English learner?</p> <p>S: When I asked my teacher how to be a better English learner, she told me to read a lot, but there are no 'easy' books available. I was also advised to speak with native speakers, to watch English programmes and always speak in English. (The researcher noticed that she wanted to become a better English learner, but that may she may not have known how.)</p> <p><i>Affective Strategies</i></p> <p>R: How do you feel when you are asked to give a presentation in English in the classroom?</p> <p><b>S: I feel worried when I am called on by the teacher to give a presentation because I am not used to speaking in front of male students,</b> especially if they are from the same region.</p> <p>R: How do you feel when you speak English with a native speaker?</p> <p>S: It is normal to speak to native teachers alone in their offices but I feel nervous when I speak to them in the classroom because I am afraid of making mistakes.</p> <p>R: How do you feel when someone who is competent in English helps you?</p> <p>S: It depends on who helps. <b>I do not mind being corrected by a teacher or by a native speaker but do not like</b></p>	<p>Feeling worried when asked to give a presentation.</p> <p>Never mind being corrected if not in front of others.</p>
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<p><b>being corrected by a classmate in front of others.</b></p> <p><i>Social Strategies</i></p> <p>R: What about reviewing English lessons with other students?</p> <p><b>S: I prefer to review my lessons alone.</b> When the teacher asked for clarification, the explanation was that she preferred to work alone and be in a quiet place away from the noise 'idle' students make.</p> <p>R: How do you check your spelling and pronunciation?</p> <p><b>S: I may either ask a teacher or a friend.</b> I do not know well how to find a pronunciation in the dictionary. .</p> <p>R: What do you think about people from other cultures who behave differently?</p> <p>S: It is their right to do what they like since they do not annoy us. At the beginning when I first enrolled at the Foundation Institute, it was strange to see a woman without <i>hijab</i> (headscarf) but now I am used to it.</p> <p><i>General Questions</i></p> <p>R: What do you think about being taught how to use learning strategies?</p> <p><b>S: I am very happy with the idea with the idea because I am able to use these strategies in groups and feel that the lesson is interesting and more useful.</b></p> <p>R: How do you evaluate the experience</p>	<p>Preferring reviewing her lessons alone.</p> <p>Asking help from others.</p> <p>Feeling satisfied with the idea of learning strategies which she thinks are useful.</p>
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<p>of being taught learning strategies during this semester?</p> <p>S: It was useful and I benefited a lot.</p> <p>R: How do you evaluate working with other students during this semester?</p> <p>S I noticed that some students did not take the matter seriously and just waited for the good students to do the work for them and some started talking in Arabic.</p> <p>R: What is the new point/strategy you have learned this semester?</p> <p>S: I have learned how to guess the meanings of ‘difficult’ words from the context and how to prepare and plan before writing paragraphs. It is useful to do the work in the class in groups and to be helped by good students. That is really useful. For me, it was a new experience and interesting where I learnt a lot of new strategies and, above all I learnt how to depend on myself.</p> <p>R: What are the strategies you are going to use when you review your lessons in the future?</p> <p>S: <b>I will try to use memory strategies, especially word mapping because it is very interesting and helped me revise a lot of vocabulary.</b> I will review and plan for the lessons before the class, I will also organize and plan before I write, and then I will review my lessons in groups in</p>	<p>Planning to transfer learning strategies to other courses.</p>
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university accommodation.	
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Name:	Maia
Gender	Female
Age	22
Major	Pharmacy
Years of study at the university	Year 2
TOEFL Score	480
Language learning experience	Almost 10 years

<p><b>Memory Strategies</b></p> <p>R: How do you memorize new English words?</p> <p>S: eh, <b>I memorize new words by repeating the word several times, first orally, then in written form.</b> Finally, I use the word in full sentences. R: What helps you to memorize the spelling of new words?</p> <p>S: er .. I write the word several times to help me to learn the spelling of the word.</p> <p>R: How do you memorize grammatical rules to apply them later when you write or speak?</p> <p>S: Mmm I do not trouble myself with learning grammatical rules.</p> <p>R: You don't think grammar is important for you?</p> <p>S: eh...laughs.... <b>I think it is important because of the exam</b> and if I know</p>	<p>Repeating the new word several times to memorize and to learn the spelling.</p> <p>Thinking that grammar is important for the exam.</p>
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<p>grammar I will be able to write and speak English well.</p> <p>R: How do you know how other students learn new words?</p> <p>S: I do not ask students how they learn new words because, er er... everyone has their own way that suits them.</p> <p><i>Cognitive Strategies</i></p> <p>R: How do you prepare for your English test?</p> <p>S: mmm <b>I prepare myself for my test from the beginning of the semester.</b> Er .. I keep a schedule and follow it.</p> <p>R: Which do you prepare: to prepare alone or with a class/roommate?</p> <p>S: er <b>I prefer to study alone to avoid distraction from others and usually favours quiet places to review, but sometimes I reviews my pharmacy lectures with my peers.</b></p> <p>R: When do you use a dictionary?</p> <p>S: <b>I use a bilingual dictionary because I can find the meaning of new words quickly.</b> If I have any difficulty in finding a word, I ask any female colleague to help me.</p> <p>I always translate the 'difficult' words from English into Arabic to understand the text easily and quickly. When reading textbooks, especially Pharmacy books, I rely heavily on my teachers; they are</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p>Preparing herself for the test from the beginning of the semester.</p> <p></p> <p>Preferring studying alone, however, with peers when reviewing pharmacy lectures.</p> <p></p> <p>Using a bilingual dictionary.</p>
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<p>helpful. It is difficult to guess the meaning of words just from the context because there are many difficult words in the text. I usually underline what I think is important.</p> <p>R: Would you ask a classmate how to use the dictionary effectively?</p> <p>S: <b>Sometimes I ask a friend to help me in using the dictionary, especially how to pronounce words. I have no idea about the phonetics transcription.</b></p> <p>R: Do you think in English or in Arabic when you write an assignment in English?</p> <p><b>I try to think in English when I write but it is difficult.</b> The teacher always tells us not to think in Arabic because she thinks that this is why we make mistakes when we write.</p> <p>R: Do you ask help from a friend or a class/roommate to assist you plan or organize a writing task?</p> <p>S: I do not ask a classmate to help me plan or organize my work. <b>I go to the Writing Center to check my work before I submit assignments to the teacher. I do not watch English films.</b></p> <p>R: When you watch an English film, do you pay attention to the speech or read the Arabic subtitles?</p> <p>S: er er. 'laughs' I don't watch English</p>	<p>Asking for help in how to use a dictionary effectively.</p> <p>Trying to think in English when writing.</p> <p>Asking help from the Writing Center.</p>
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<p>films because my parents don't like that I watch films, but when I do I read the subtitles.</p> <p><b>Compensation Strategies</b></p> <p>R: What about guessing the meanings of new words while reading or listening to someone?</p> <p>S: <b>I sometimes guess the meanings of new words while reading,</b> but in listening I do not try because I think it is difficult.</p> <p>R: What do you think of asking someone to help you guess the meanings of new words by giving you clues?</p> <p>S: <b>In the classroom I sometimes ask my neighbours. I usually ask my teachers for the meaning of the 'difficult' words.</b></p> <p>R: What do you do when you can't find a word during a conversation or writing?</p> <p>S: In the event that I do not find a word, <b>I try to explain it or think of a word that has the same meaning.</b> If I speak to a teacher who knows Arabic, I can use the Arabic equivalent. In writing, I look for an alternative word or, if I am in class, I may ask a friend or the teacher.</p> <p>R: If you were given a chance, would you ask others to help you find a word or an equivalent of a word you want to use?</p> <p>S: Yes. I always ask my classmates and friend about equivalent words.</p>	<p>Guessing the meanings of unfamiliar words during reading.</p> <p>Relying on the teacher.</p> <p>Using a synonymous word or explaining in simple words when failed to find a word in conversation.</p>
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<p>Sometimes I ask them to translate certain words or a suitable word.</p> <p><b>Metacognitive Strategies</b></p> <p>R: What do you think of taking notes during the lecture?</p> <p>S: <b>I keep a notebook with me during lectures to write down new vocabulary as the knowledge of new words helps with reading and writing skills in English.</b></p> <p>R: Before writing, do you try to plan and organize your ideas?</p> <p>S: er er.... <b>I try to plan and organize my ideas before I start writing.</b></p> <p>R: Which do you prefer to plan and organize your ideas alone or ask someone for help?</p> <p>S: <b>I prefer doing all my work alone to avoid any nuisances.</b></p> <p>R: When watching an English programme on a TV, do you pay attention to the way people on the programme speak?</p> <p>S: When watching an English film, which rarely happens, <b>I listen carefully to the way that words are said and try to mimic the pronunciation.</b></p> <p>R: What do you do to be a better English learner?</p> <p>To be a better English learner I need to work hard and read a lot of books, as the</p>	<p>Keeping a notebook to write down new words.</p> <p>Planning and organizing ideas in writing.</p> <p>Preferring doing things alone.</p> <p>Paying attention to pronunciation.</p>
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<p>teacher usually tells us.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Affective Strategies</i></p> <p>R: How do you feel when you are asked to give a presentation in English in the classroom?</p> <p>S: (Mariam expressed displeasure at being called upon in the class by the teacher because <b>she did not want to speak in English in front of the male students for fear that they might ridicule her.</b>)</p> <p>S: er.er I never volunteer myself to answer the teacher's questions because <b>I don't want to make mistakes in front of the other students.</b></p> <p>R: How do you feel when you speak in English with a native speaker?</p> <p>S: <b>I feel happy when I speak English with native speakers and they understand me.</b> I try not to speak to them in front of other students.</p> <p>R: How do you feel when someone who knows English better corrects you?</p> <p>S: <b>I don't mind being corrected, however I don't like this to be done in front of my peers.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Social Strategies</i></p> <p>R: What about reviewing English lessons with other students?</p> <p>S: <b>I always try to avoid nuisances, so I</b></p>	<p>Rejecting the idea of speaking in English in front of the male students.</p> <p>Avoiding making mistakes in front of the students.</p> <p>Feeling happy when speaking with a native speaker.</p> <p>Does not mind being corrected on condition that it does not happen in front of the students.</p> <p>Avoiding reviewing lessons with others.</p>
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<p><b>prefer to study alone.</b> However, when there are upcoming exams I find it useful to work with my colleagues because most students become focused during that time. I don't check my own mistakes but sometimes I am corrected by her teacher.</p> <p><b>General Questions</b></p> <p>R: What do you think of teaching you how to use learning strategies? How do you evaluate them?</p> <p><b>S: Being taught learning strategies was very useful and interesting.</b></p> <p>R: How do you think of working with other students during this semester?</p> <p><b>I don't mind working in a group</b> on condition that all students in the group are serious and could help each other.</p> <p>R: What is the new thing /strategy you have learnt this semester?</p> <p><b>S: I have learnt a lot,</b> For example, I did not previously know how to find the lexical category of words from the dictionary. One of the students in the group showed me. Another explained to me how to find collocations. I enjoyed group work, because all the students in my group were serious and enthusiastic.</p> <p>R: What are the strategies you are going to use in the future?</p> <p><b>S: I hope to use all the strategies I have learnt in my studies.</b></p>	<p>Feeling satisfied with being taught LLS.</p> <p>Welcoming group work since students are serious.</p> <p>Thinking that group work and LLS are useful.</p> <p>Intending to use the LLS in the future.</p>
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Name:	Ibtisam
Gender	Female
Age	22
Major	Special Education
Years of study at the university	Year 2
TOEFL Score	430
Language learning experience	Almost 10 years

### IBTISAM

<p><b><i>Memory Strategies</i></b></p> <p>R: How do you memorize new English words?</p> <p>(Most of the interview questions were translated into Arabic because she could not understand them, and instead began to smile and laugh when she was asked questions.)</p> <p>S: <b>I try to memorize the vocabulary in the textbook by repeating the words many times; the next day</b>, however, I do not remember them.</p> <p>R: What helps you memorize the spelling of new words?</p> <p>S: <b>Spelling is my main problem</b> and am able to write very few words in English.</p> <p>R: How do you learn and memorize grammatical rules to apply them later when you write or speak in English?</p> <p>S: I do not try to memorize grammatical</p>	<p>Trying to repeat the new words several times to memorize and learn but in vein.</p> <p>Spelling is a problem.</p>
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<p>understand and so I sometimes ask my friends and teachers to explain.</p> <p>R: Do you read any English book outside the classroom?</p> <p>S: I never carry my textbook with me outside the classroom and rarely try to read the book outside of the class. I just try to focus on learning the meanings of ‘difficult’ words. Writing to me is an extremely very difficult skill to master.</p> <p>R: When you read, do you try to underline the main ideas? Do you ask someone else to help you find the main ideas?</p> <p>S: laughs and gives no answer. (When asked a question that she did not understand, the researcher explained in Arabic and she simply laughed.)</p> <p>R: When you write, do you think in Arabic first and then translate into English:</p> <p>S: She laughs and gives no answer.</p> <p>R: What about asking a class/roommate to help you plan and organize the ideas before you start writing?</p> <p>S: <b>I often ask my roommate to help me with writing assignments and with planning and organizing</b>, but in spite of this I cannot write well.</p> <p>R: When you watch an English film, do you pay attention to the speech or read</p>	<p>Asking help to plan and organize before writing an assignment.</p>
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<p>the Arabic subtitles?</p> <p><b>S: I never watch English films.</b></p> <p><i>Compensation Strategies</i></p> <p>R: What about guessing the meanings of new words while reading or listening to someone?</p> <p><b>S: I try to guess the meanings of the ‘difficult’ words,</b> as instructed by the teacher, but I am usually unable to guess because most of the words are too difficult. (The researcher asked her how she was able to understand the textbooks of her major. She said that all of her textbooks are in Arabic.)</p> <p>T: What do you do when you can't find a word during a conversation or writing?</p> <p>S: I ask for help from my friends to translate words into Arabic. If I do not find a particular word, I substitute it for another word. With writing tasks, I sometimes write the words in Arabic but this type of behaviour once led the teacher to become angry with me. Many times, I have asked a friend to find a word to complete a sentence.</p> <p><i>Metacognitive Strategies</i></p> <p>R: What do you think of taking notes during lectures?</p> <p><b>S: I always keep a notebook with me in all of my lectures in order to take notes.</b> In English lectures, I find it</p>	<p>Watching no films.</p> <p>Guessing the meanings of words while reading a text.</p> <p>Keeping a notebook during the lectures to take notes.</p>
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<p>difficult to take notes. Nevertheless, I writes the new words and their meanings in Arabic along with their pronunciation. (The researcher asked her how to write the pronunciation of the English words. She said immediately (in Arabic sounds, of course), When he told her it would be difficult to read it, she asked, “What should I do?” She then added that they do not need English in their job so why should they study English? The researcher did not answer the ‘logical’ question and proceeded to the next question of the interview.)</p> <p>R: Before writing, do you try to plan and organize your ideas?</p> <p>S: <b>I plan and organize my ideas by writing them down in Arabic in my notebook.</b> I prefer to prepare and plan with other because some students “are very good at English”.</p> <p>R: When watching an English programme on a TV, do you pay attention in the way people on the programme speak?</p> <p>S: <b>I rarely watch English films/programmes</b> because I do not understand their content and there are some scenes, which are against Islamic culture.</p> <p>R: What do you do to be a better</p>	<p></p> <p>Planning and organizing before starting writing.</p> <p>Rarely watching English films.</p>
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<p>language learner?</p> <p>To the researcher's surprise, she said she does not want to be good at English.</p> <p><b><i>Affective Strategies</i></b></p> <p>R: How do you feel when you are asked to give a presentation in English in the classroom?</p> <p>S: <b>I find it horrible to give presentations in front of students, especially male students.</b></p> <p>R: How do you feel when you speak English with a native speaker?</p> <p>S: I try to speak English with the native speakers, but they do not understand me, so I feel disappointed.</p> <p>R: How do you feel when someone knows English better helps you or corrects you?</p> <p>S: <b>I have no problem with being corrected by anyone, but not in front of students and not in the classroom.</b> (In English lessons, she sits at the back of the class and never volunteers to answer questions since she is too anxious about making mistakes and being subsequently corrected.)</p> <p><b><i>Social Strategies</i></b></p> <p>R: What about reviewing English lessons with other students?</p> <p>S: <b>I prefer to review English with others</b> because I struggle to understand</p>	<p></p> <p>Feeling worried when giving a presentation.</p> <p></p> <p>Having no problem being corrected if it is done away from her classmates.</p> <p></p> <p>Preferring working with others.</p>
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<p>English unaided.</p> <p>R: What do you think of people from other cultures who behave differently?</p> <p>S: <b>The ‘foreigners’ wear different clothes and I do not like their clothes.</b></p> <p><i>General Questions</i></p> <p>R: What do you think of teaching you how to use learning strategies?</p> <p>S: <b>I think that teaching learning strategies is a good idea</b> but I think we need to be taught a lot of vocabulary. (Her problem is that she cannot understand the basic content: how then can she be expected to use learning strategies if she struggles with understanding and has an inability to read English? She believes that strategies might be useful for those who know English. When the teacher asked her whether she benefited from the learning strategies teaching, she responded neither positively nor negatively.)</p> <p>R: How do you evaluate working with other students during this semester?</p> <p>S: <b>I was happy to work in groups</b> because, as I previously stated, I work well with people who are serious and eager to help.</p> <p>R: What is the new thing/strategy you have learned this semester?</p> <p>S: I feel as though my English has</p>	<p>Having no tolerance towards other cultures.</p> <p>Thinking teaching LLS as a good idea.</p> <p>Thinking group work is a good idea.</p>
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improved somewhat. (She laughed and said, “I am not going to study English in the future; let me pass this semester and that is it.”)	
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Name:	Ali
Gender	Male
Age	23
Major	Engineering
Years of study at the university	Year 4
TOEFL Score	500
Language learning experience	Almost 12 years

## ALI

<p><b><i>Memory Strategies</i></b></p> <p>R: how do you memorize new English words?</p> <p>S: <b>The best way for me to memorize new words is to write down the words many times and use them in sentences repeatedly</b>, focusing on new words when they appear in textbooks other than English courses</p> <p>R: What helps you memorise the spelling of new words?</p> <p>S: <b>Writing and using the words several times makes it easy for me to memorise the spelling.</b> I found ‘word mapping’ very interesting and helped me to recall words easily.</p>	<p>Writing the new word several times and using them in sentences repeatedly to learn new words and their spelling.</p>
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<p>R: How do you learn and memorise grammatical rules to apply them later when you write or speak in English?</p>	
<p>S: <b>I don't try to memorize the grammatical rules but I do my best to understand from the teacher and the textbook, then try to produce similar sentences.</b> I write the grammatical rule on the page, then try to apply it by writing similar sentences to the example given in the textbook and the sentences used by the teacher.</p>	<p>Learning grammar by using it not by memorizing grammatical rules.</p>
<p>R: How do you know how other students learn new words?</p>	
<p>S: I don't bother myself with the ways in which other students learn.</p>	
<p><b><i>Cognitive Strategies</i></b></p>	
<p>R: How do you prepare for your English test?</p>	
<p>S: <b>From the first week of the semester, I prepare myself for the exam by reviewing my lessons on a daily basis.</b></p>	<p>Preparing for the exam from the very beginning.</p>
<p>R: Which do you prefer: to prepare alone or with a friend?</p>	
<p>S: <b>I prefer to study alone because students at the hostel tend to chat with one another and waste time;</b> therefore, I found it better to stay away from distraction. I sometimes ask a close friend for assistance if I encounter any difficulties while studying.</p>	<p>Preferring studying alone.</p>

<p>R: When do you use a dictionary?</p> <p><b>S: I carry a dictionary with me and use it whenever I encounter an unfamiliar word.</b></p> <p>R: Would you ask a class/roommate how to use the dictionary effectively?</p> <p>S: I don't have any difficulty in using the dictionary.</p> <p>R: What do you think of translating the new words of an English text into Arabic when you read?</p> <p><b>S: I sometimes resort to translating, especially for technical and abstract words.</b> I try to guess and infer the meaning of new words but for me, as I was advised by my teacher, it is not essential to know every word and its exact meaning.</p> <p>R: When you read, do you try to underline the main ideas? Do you ask someone else to help you find the main ideas?</p> <p><b>S: Understanding the main idea is of far greater importance</b> but if I am unable to grasp the main concept, I feel quite reluctant to seek help from others.</p> <p>R: When you write, do you think in Arabic first and then translate into English?</p> <p><b>S: I do my best to learn to think in English, but I don't find this an easy</b></p>	<p>Using a dictionary all the time.</p> <p>Using translation sometimes.</p> <p>Highlighting the main ideas is important for him.</p> <p>Trying to think in English.</p>
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<p><b>task.</b></p> <p>R: What about asking a classroom/roommate to help you plan and organize the ideas before you start writing?</p> <p>S: <b>I don't ask anyone to help me organize or plan my work.</b></p> <p>R: When you watch an English film, do you pay attention to the speech or read the Arabic subtitles?</p> <p>S: If I have time to watch an English film, <b>I try to focus on the pronunciation</b> of words but frankly speaking it is not always easy to follow; therefore, I try to watch and read the subtitles simultaneously.</p> <p><i>Compensation Strategies</i></p> <p>R: What about guessing the meanings of new words while reading or listening to someone?</p> <p>S: In my opinion, <b>guessing the meaning of new words while reading saves times</b>, but this proves is more difficult in listening practices.</p> <p>R: What do you think of asking someone to help you guess the meanings of new words by giving you clues?</p> <p>S: er er While doing group work in class, <b>I ask others for help in inferring and guessing meaning by providing cues to the points of which I may not be aware</b></p>	<p>Asking no help from classmates to help in planning or organizing ideas before writing.</p> <p>Focusing on pronunciation when watching an English film.</p> <p>Guessing from contexts is important and saves time.</p> <p>Asking for help while doing work in group.</p>
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<p>of .</p> <p>R: What do you do when you can't find a word during a conversation or writing?</p> <p>S: When I do not find a word during writing or speaking, <b>I either explain what I want to say or make use of a synonymous word.</b></p> <p>R: If you were given a chance, would you ask others to help you find a word or equivalent of a word you want to use?</p> <p>S: I don't mind asking for help in such cases.</p> <p><i>Metacognitive strategies</i></p> <p>R: What do you think of taking notes during the lectures?</p> <p>S: <b>I usually keep a notebook with me during lectures</b> to take notes. I write down all the points raised by the teacher along with any new words.</p> <p>R: Before writing, do you try to plan and organize your ideas?</p> <p>S: <b>I usually plan and organize my ideas before I write as this saves times.</b></p> <p>R: Which do you prefer: to plan and organize your ideas alone or ask someone for help?</p> <p>S: I usually do my planning and organizing alone, but sometimes I may ask a friend for his opinion. As I said before, I do both.</p> <p>R: What do you do to be a better English</p>	<p>Using synonymous words or explaining in simple words.</p> <p>Keeping notes during a lecture to take notes.</p> <p>Planning and organizing ideas before starting writing.</p>
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<p>learner?</p> <p>S: To be a better English learner, <b>I read books and try to watch English programmes.</b> Reading books that are related to my major in English is also helpful.”</p> <p><i>Affective Strategies</i></p> <p>R: How do you feel when you are asked to give a presentation in English in the classroom?</p> <p>S: With regards to giving presentations to the entire class, Ali says, “<b>To begin with, I feel a bit worried but then it becomes normal.</b>”</p> <p>R: How do you feel when you speak English with a native speaker?</p> <p>S: <b>When I speak English with a native speaker, I feel happy and satisfied.</b></p> <p>R: How do you feel when someone who knows English better corrects/helps you?</p> <p>S: I don't mind being corrected, as long as it is not in a sarcastic way.</p> <p><i>Social strategies</i></p> <p>R: What about reviewing English lessons with other students?</p> <p>S: <b>I do not like reviewing lessons with others.</b> However, if I am unsure of the pronunciation or spelling of a word, I either ask a friend, the teacher or check the dictionary.</p> <p>R: What do you think of people from</p>	<p>Reading books and watch English programmes improve the target language.</p> <p>Feeling worried at the beginning of the presentation.</p> <p>Feeling happy and satisfied when communicating with a native speaker.</p> <p>Preferring reviewing lessons alone.</p>
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<p>other cultures who behave differently?</p> <p>S: I know that they are different in their clothes, but they respect us and we have to respect them.</p> <p><b>General Questions</b></p> <p>R: What do you think of teaching you to use learning strategies?</p> <p>S: In my opinion, <b>being taught learning strategies was incredibly interesting and useful.</b></p> <p>R: How do you evaluate teaching learning strategies?</p> <p>S: (answered above)</p> <p>R: How do you evaluate working with other students during this semester?</p> <p>S: <b>Working in a group was useful most of the time</b> but sometimes I felt as though some students were too dependent on their colleagues and waited for others to do their work for them, which was something that annoyed me.</p> <p>R: What is the new thing/strategy you have learned this semester?</p> <p>S: Through the teaching of learning strategies, <b>I learned to depend upon myself.</b> I used to depend on the teacher, now I have realized I can do many things myself. I would try to use most of the strategies I have learnt in the future.</p>	<p>Thinking that LLS teaching is useful.</p> <p>Thinking that group work is useful.</p> <p>Learning strategies encourages autonomous learning.</p>
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## AMANY

Name:	Amani
Gender	Female
Age	22
Major	English Translation
Years of study at the university	Year 2
TOEFL Score	480
Language learning experience	Almost 10 years

<p><b>Memory Strategies</b></p> <p>R: How do you memorise new English words?</p> <p>S: <b>I write new words in my notebook and then repeat them orally, then try to use them in proper sentences.</b> I often find forming sentences using new words is difficult.</p> <p>R: What helps you memorise the spelling of new words?</p> <p>S: For spelling, I employ the same strategy, i.e. <b>repeating orally.</b></p> <p>R: How do you learn/memorise grammatical rules to apply them later when you write or speak?</p> <p>S: I think that grammar is very important and so I try to learn grammar rules. For this, <b>I keep a notebook to write the grammar rules, read the rules many times thereafter and try to apply them</b></p>	<p>Writing down new words in the notebook and repeating them orally and then using them in sentences.</p> <p>Repeating the new word orally to memorize and learn the spelling.</p> <p>Considering grammar rules as important and trying to apply them when writing.</p>
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<p><b>when I write. In spite of this,</b> I make grammatical mistakes in writing.</p> <p>R: How do you know how other students learn new words?</p> <p>S: I don't ask other students about how they learn new words. <b>That makes no sense to me.</b></p> <p><i>Cognitive Strategies</i></p> <p>R: How do you prepare for your English test?</p> <p>S: <b>I prepare for English tests from the very beginning of the semester on a daily basis</b> (almost four hours a day).</p> <p>R: Which do you prefer: to prepare alone or with a class/roommate?</p> <p>S: <b>For me it is better to study alone and to be away from the distractions of students who are not serious.</b></p> <p>R: When do you use a dictionary?</p> <p>S: Being a translation student, <b>I prefer a bilingual dictionary and use it,</b> as I was instructed by my teacher, a dictionary is also important to check the pronunciation, grammar and meaning of vocabulary. This is why I have both a bilingual and monolingual English-English dictionary.</p> <p>R: Would you ask a friend how to use the dictionary effectively?</p> <p>S: If I have any difficulty, I can ask anyone for help.</p>	<p>Knowing how other students learn is not important.</p> <p>Preparing for the exam from the beginning of the semester.</p> <p>Working alone.</p> <p>Using a bilingual dictionary.</p>
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<p>R: What do you think of translating the new words of an English text into Arabic words when you read?</p> <p>S: <b>I usually translate texts while reading from English into Arabic</b> for two reasons; to understand and to practice translation.</p> <p>R: What do you do if there are some new words in a text that you are reading?</p> <p>S: <b>If there is a new word that I do not know, I consult the dictionary or ask the teacher.</b> If I can, I guess the meaning too.</p> <p>R: When you read, do you try to underline the main ideas? Do you ask someone else to help you find the main ideas?</p> <p>S: While reading, <b>I prefer to underline the main points</b>, but teachers tell us not to do that because we return books at the end of the semester.</p> <p>R: When you write, do you think in Arabic first and then translate into English?</p> <p>S: <b>My problem with writing is that I still think in Arabic</b>, but I try hard to think and write in English.</p> <p>R: What about asking a class/roommate to help you plan /organize the ideas before you start writing?</p> <p>S: I do not ask anyone to help me. <b>I</b></p>	<p>Translating English words into Arabic while reading.</p> <p>Applying employing different strategies when faced new words.</p> <p>Underlining the main ideas while reading is important.</p> <p>Thinking in Arabic while writing in English is a problem.</p> <p>Preferring working alone.</p>
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<p><b>prefer doing my work alone.</b></p> <p>R: When you watch an English film, do you pay attention to the speech or read the Arabic subtitles?</p> <p>S: When I watch films I try to think in both Arabic and English because I practise translation while watching films. Reading the subtitles helps me do this.</p> <p><b><i>Compensation Strategies</i></b></p> <p>R: What about guessing the meanings of new words while reading or listening to someone?</p> <p>S: <b>Guessing the meanings while reading a text is useful but it is not easy.</b> (She claims that she is often unfamiliar with many of the words in a text and guessing meaning is particularly difficult from English textbooks, such as <i>History of Linguistics</i>. She thinks this may be easier to do in listening exercises.)</p> <p>R: What do you do when you can't find a word during a conversation or writing?</p> <p>S: <b>Sometimes I ask my neighbour to help me when we do the work in groups. When I do not find or forget a word, I explain what I want to say or use another word of the same meaning. I rarely ask others to help me.</b></p> <p><b><i>Metacognitive strategies</i></b></p> <p>R: What do you think of taking notes</p>	<p>Guessing the meaning of new words is not easy but useful.</p> <p>Using a synonymous word or asking a friend for help when failed to find a word.</p>
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<p>during the lectures?</p> <p><b>S: I usually keep a notebook with me in the class to write down new words, grammatical rules and reminders of homework and assignments.</b> My notebook is very important to me.</p> <p>R: Before writing, do you try to plan and organize your ideas?</p> <p>S: As I have studied in Writing 1 (a college requirement course), <b>I plan and organize my ideas before I start writing.</b></p> <p>R: Which do you prefer: to plan and organize your ideas alone or ask someone for help?</p> <p><b>S: I usually do my work alone.</b></p> <p>R: When watching an English programme on a TV, do you pay attention to the way people on the programme speak?</p> <p><b>S: I listen to the way people say words and I read subtitles to practise translation.</b></p> <p>R: What do you do to be a better English learner?</p> <p>S: I read English books and try to speak English with my friends – but they sometimes refuse. I also watch English programmes on the TV and listen to programmes on the radio.”</p> <p><i>Affective Strategies</i></p>	<p>Keeping a notebook for different purposes.</p> <p>Planning and organizing ideas before starting writing.</p> <p>Doing her work alone.</p> <p>Listening to the way people pronounce words and reading subtitles to practice translating.</p>
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<p>R: How do you feel when you are asked to give a presentation in English in the classroom?</p> <p>S: <b>I like giving presentations to the class in English, but I sometimes feel worried.</b></p> <p>R: How do you feel when you speak English to a native speaker?</p> <p>S: In my opinion, speaking to native speakers is a good experience but sometimes I feel they do not understand me.</p> <p>R: How do you feel when someone who knows English better helps you?</p> <p>S: <b>I don't mind being corrected;</b> in fact, I have been corrected by the teacher many times and I believe I have learnt from that.</p> <p><i>Social Strategies</i></p> <p>R: What about reviewing English lessons with other students?</p> <p>S: <b>I review my lessons alone because I understand well when I review by herself in a quiet place.</b></p> <p>R: How do you check your spelling or pronunciation?</p> <p>S: <b>I use the dictionary to check spelling and pronunciation.</b></p> <p>R: What do you think of people from other cultures who behave differently?</p> <p>S: I know that it is their culture and it is</p>	<p>Giving a presentation is not a problem.</p> <p>Being corrected is not a problem.</p> <p>Preferring reviewing lessons alone.</p> <p>Using the dictionary for phonology and orthography.</p>
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<p>different from ours.</p> <p><b>General Questions</b></p> <p>R: What do you think of teaching you how to use learning strategies?</p> <p><b>S: I believe that teaching of learning strategies was interesting and beneficial.</b></p> <p>R: How do you evaluate teaching learning strategies? (answered above)</p> <p>R: How do you evaluate working with other students during this semester?</p> <p><b>S: Working in groups was useful as the students helped each other</b> but, (according to Amany,) some students do not always participate. Rather, they pretend to work when the teacher approaches them, otherwise they simply wait for other students to answer the questions. In these cases, group work can be a waste of time.</p> <p>R: What is the new thing/strategy you have learned this semester?</p> <p>S: I have learnt to guess new words from contexts and learned how to take notes, besides I have learned a number of other strategies.</p> <p>R: What are the strategies you are going to use when you review your lessons in the future?</p> <p><b>S: I hope to use all these strategies in my future studies.</b></p>	<p>Believing that teach LLS is interesting and useful.</p> <p>Praising group work.</p> <p>Willing to use LLS in her future studies.</p>
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**AHMED**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Ahmed</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Major</b>	<b>Arabic</b>
<b>Years of study at the university</b>	<b>Year 1</b>
<b>TOEFL Score</b>	<b>430</b>
<b>Language learning experience</b>	<b>Almost 10 years</b>

<p><b><i>Memory Strategies</i></b></p> <p>R: How do you memorize new English words?</p> <p><b>S: I memorize new words by repeating them orally several times.</b></p> <p>R: What helps you memorize the spelling of new words?</p> <p><b>S: I find spelling very difficult and I always make mistakes. I do not know how to memorize but try to emulate my friends in repeatedly writing out new vocabulary.</b></p> <p>R: How do you memorize and learn grammatical rules to apply them later when you write or speak?</p> <p><b>S: I do not like grammar and I do not memorize. I do not think I need</b></p>	<p>Repeating the new words several times to learn and memorize them.</p> <p>Learning from others.</p> <p>Giving no weight to grammar.</p>
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<p><b>grammar.</b></p> <p>R: How do you know how other students learn new words?</p> <p>S: I do not ask other students how they learn.</p> <p><i><b>Cognitive Strategies</b></i></p> <p>R: How do you prepare for your English tests?</p> <p><b>S: I study English close to the exam period</b> and my friends help me prepare for the exam.</p> <p>R: Which do you prefer: to prepare alone or with a class/roommate?</p> <p><b>S: I like to study alone but English is very difficult so I ask my friends to help me.</b></p> <p>R: When do you use a dictionary?</p> <p><b>S: I use the dictionary when I read the English textbook. It is very difficult. I use a bilingual dictionary to translate.</b></p> <p>R: Would you ask a class/roommate how to use a dictionary effectively?</p> <p>S: I know how to get the meanings of words from my mobile dictionary.</p> <p>R: What do you think of translating the new words of a text into Arabic when you read?</p> <p><b>S: I cannot understand the textbook if I do not translate it.</b> I use the dictionary and ask my friends to translate words into Arabic. The teacher does not give the</p>	<p></p> <p>Preparing for the English test on the last days.</p> <p>Preferring to study alone.</p> <p>Depending on a bilingual dictionary.</p> <p>Thinking that translation is a vehicle to understanding.</p>
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meanings in Arabic. Many words are difficult, so I always use the dictionary.	
R: When you read, do you try to underline the main ideas? What about asking someone else to help you find the main ideas?	
S: <b>I do not underline.</b> I learn the new vocabulary to pass the exam.	Underlining the main ideas is not important.
R: When you write, do you think in Arabic first and then translate into English?	
S: <b>I find writing is very difficult.</b> I just write two or three words in English and ask my friends to help to write full paragraphs; sometimes they help and sometimes they are busy or do not want to help. Ahmed explains. When the researcher asked him why he did not go to the Writing Center, he said, "In the Writing Center, they need completed pieces of work to proofread."	Writing is a difficult skill.
R: When you watch an English film, do you pay attention to the speech or read the Arabic subtitles?	
S: I do not watch English films but I like listening to English songs.	
<b><i>Compensation Strategies</i></b>	
R: What about guessing the meanings of new words while reading or listening to someone?	
S: <b>I do not guess, because I find all</b>	Guessing is difficult and needs that one

<p><b>words difficult.</b></p> <p>R: What do you think of asking someone to help you guess the meanings of new words?</p> <p>S: <b>I always ask my friends to explain the text in Arabic and when it comes to writing,</b> I always need someone to explain the question in Arabic.</p> <p><i>Metacognitive Strategies</i></p> <p>R: What do you think of taking notes during the lecture?</p> <p>S: <b>I write in my notebooks all vocabulary and list the words with their meanings and pronunciation in Arabic.</b></p> <p>R: Before writing, do you plan and organize you ideas?</p> <p>S: <b>I do not know how to write a paragraph.</b> The researcher proceeded to the next question. Ahmed does not watch English films and does not want to excel in English.</p> <p><i>Affective Strategies</i></p> <p>R: How do you feel when you are asked to give a presentation in English in the class?</p> <p>S: <b>To me giving presentations in English is dreadful</b> but my teachers always insist upon me, which I thoroughly dislike</p> <p>R: How do you feel when you speak</p>	<p>knows the meanings of other words.</p> <p>Relying heavily on other students.</p> <p>Keeping a multipurpose notebook with him.</p> <p>Writing is problematic.</p> <p>Feeling worried when giving a presentation.</p>
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<p>English with a native speaker"</p> <p>S: (Laughs.) I do not speak with native speakers because all those who teach me are Arabic speakers.</p> <p><b><i>Social Strategies</i></b></p> <p>R: What about reviewing English lessons with other students?</p> <p>S: (Smiles) <b>Reviewing English with others is useful because they can translate any difficult word in Arabic.</b></p> <p>R: How do you check your spelling or pronunciation?</p> <p>S: No answer.</p> <p>R: What do you think of people from other cultures who behave differently?</p> <p>S: <b>The first time I came to the university (in the Foundation Institute) I felt angry when I found female teachers not wearing <i>hijab</i> but now it is normal.</b> I know that is their culture; it is different from our culture.</p> <p><b><i>General Questions</i></b></p> <p>R: What do you think of teaching you how to use learning strategies?</p> <p>S: <b>Teaching learning strategies may be good with capable students who understand English.</b></p> <p>R: How do you evaluate teaching learning strategies? This question was skipped.</p> <p>R: How do you evaluate working with</p>	<p>Reviewing lessons with other students.</p> <p>Being tolerant with other cultures.</p> <p>Thinking that LLS teaching is only useful with good students.</p>
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<p>other students during this semester?</p> <p><b>S: Working in groups is also beneficial because students help each other.</b> At this point he laughed and said, “It would be nice if you let us do the exam in groups.”</p>	<p>Working in groups is useful.</p>
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**Student A** wrote:

<p><i>“This week I learn some words like focus, attract, and increase. I used the strategies I learn. The lesson was clear and easy. Group work was help me The homework help me in English skills”</i></p>	<p>Learning new words using strategies s/he has learnt strategies.</p>
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**Student B** wrote:

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<p><b><i>The activities that was useful for me the group work in the classroom useful. I focus on grammar and vocabulary as well as extensive reading”</i></b></p> <p><i>“Dear instructor,</i>  <i>I am trying to improve my grammar in this course I try to benefit from other students in the class as well but the book is not very good it doesn’t give much exercise for each question or task it have the answer or it. This weeks was good apart from these task in the book about</i></p>	<p>Focusing on grammar and vocabulary.  Benefiting from group work.</p>
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<i>been using these strategies to improve my skills. <b>The students benefited me with things that I didn't know also the team work in the class I think is very good to share our ideas and skills.</b></i>	Benefiting from group collaborative learning.
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**Student D** wrote:

<i><b>"I found the benefits from the team work and from the Moodle. My vocabulary and grammar improved. In the class we go quickly and grammar needs more time in teaching. I want to say one point; you are not looking at all the group. You only check the work of few groups."</b></i>	Benefiting from group work in learning grammar and vocabulary.
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**Student E** wrote:

<i><b>"The group work and learning strategies are useful. The exercises on the Moodle are meaningful and useful. <b>You don't explain grammar so much and we don't understand grammar. You don't help us answer the exercises in the book inside the classroom step by step"</b></b></i>	Working in group and learning strategies are useful. Complaining about grammar.
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**Student F** wrote:

<i><b>"Every day I choose time to take practice</b></i>	Memorizing new words at night.
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<p><i>at Moodle to do quiz and assignments.</i></p> <p><i>At night often <b>I memorize new words.</b> I want to tell you about your teaching, <b>I want to you to focus in grammar because it is very important.</b> And you <b>should correct us when we make mistakes.</b> I feel sometimes comfortable when you explain but sometimes not and I hope you renew your explain method.</i></p> <p><i><b>Group work and learning strategies useful and benefited a lot.”</b></i></p>	<p>Requesting the teacher to focus on grammar 'because it is important' and correct them immediately when students make mistakes.</p> <p>Working in group and learning strategies are useful.</p>
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**Student G** wrote:

<p><i>“This week I learn many things. The first thing <b>I save some words (s/he probably meant ‘memorized’)</b> and used the world (may mean word) in sentences. Also I go (log on) to the Moodle and <b>I do many practice go to listen the paragraph and know the meaning of the vocabulary.</b> Also I use dictionary to know some words. This week I see the film and learn some new words from it.”</i></p>	<p>Memorizing new words and using them into sentences to learn them. Practicing listening and watching English films.</p>
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**Student H** wrote:

<p><i>“This week I learn more vocabulary. In fact it’s easy to study because we discuss in class with our group then with the</i></p>	<p>Benefiting from group work in learning new words.</p>
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<p><b>teacher.</b> <i>I do some activities in the model (may mean Moodle) I do tow (may mean two) practices about vocabulary and other types of word (noun, verb, adjectives) (may mean lexical category). Also started to read a story about ‘The Gift of Wise Men’. Finally, I start improve my vocabulary and English from discuss with group.”</i></p>	
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**Student I** wrote:

<p><i>“I want to tell you one thing. First when you explain anything try to clear it (may mean make it clear) and try to explain the meaning of difficult word in Arabic because many students major is not English. This week’s lesson is very important and I try to know all thing. My teacher give us many important thing, he give us learning strategies to improve English skills. <b>I started to learn learning strategies to do very well. This week I try with my friends to know all thing they don’t know and I hope to do very well in other weeks for all students”</b></i></p>	<p>Working in group and learning strategies are useful.</p>
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**Student J** wrote:

<p><i>“The Moodle exercises was the most meaningful because they <b>improved my</b></i></p>	<p><i>Improving grammar and vocabulary.</i></p>
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<p><b>grammar and vocabulary.</b></p> <p><b>To improve other skills:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>5. Listen to English songs from Sami Youssef.</b></li> <li><b>6. I read course instructions</b></li> <li><b>7. I write whatsapp messages in English</b></li> <li><b>8. I spoke English with my friends</b></li> </ol> <p><i>I also did hard work in reading of English 2 textbook. I went through the Moodle and work in my assignment.</i></p> <p><i><b>This week I tried to translate some words to improve my reading skills. This week lessons were very good. Thank you for your ways and strategies you are teaching. I have started the new strategies that you teach us. I've got benefit with group work and helping each other."</b></i></p>	<p>Doing varieties of activities to improve different skills.</p> <p>Translating to improve reading skills.</p>
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